













*Photo and block by "Statesman" Process Dept.*

THE AUTHORS.

Lieutenants Paier and McIntosh, on arrival at Calcutta.

# *The Record Flight from London to Calcutta*

*Being the experiences and adventures of Lieutenants  
Raymond Parer and John Cowie McIntosh (Australian  
Flying Corps) on their most remarkable flight.*

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**To**

**PETER DAWSON, Esq.**

**WHO LISTENED TO OUR PROJECT, ASTOUNDED US WITH  
IMMEDIATE SYMPATHETIC LIBERALITY AND MADE  
US UNCERTAIN OF THE FEELING FORCED DEEP  
INTO US OF THE WANT OF SYMPATHY  
BETWEEN THE OPULENT AND  
THE POOR.**

# The Record Flight from London to Calcutta

LIEUTENANT RAYMOND JOHN PAUL PARER, A.F.C., was born on the 22nd of February, 1895, at St. Kilda, Melbourne, Australia.

At the age of ten he went to St. Francis Xavier College, Melbourne, and in due course took up mathematics seriously under the Revd. Father Boylan, S.J., and remained under that eminent mathematician for two years. Having done remarkably well and having shown his professor that he had a mathematical mind, he went on to attend the Melbourne University Extension Lectures, where there was no keener student of the higher mathematics. At the same time he studied the intricacies and weaknesses of internal combustion engines and determined that these should be his specialty.

It was not long before young Parer was at work on something new, and the one person to whom he confided his theoretical discovery marked it down as an epoch-maker and offered the young engineer all the capital he required to get his engine on the bench. At about this time there was the talk of War and before many weeks had passed, the Huns were in Belgium. Parer

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was persuaded to go ahead with his discovery rather than to follow his own wish to join the Australian Forces and get to the Front; on the suggestion of his friend, who assured him that his country would be much better served could he produce an engine which would revolutionise motor traction in the War theatres. He was however unhappy at his work and wanted to be off to the firing-line. In such a condition of mind the best was not forthcoming and he decided to leave his lathe and bench and join up in the branch of the service the most closely connected with the engines he so well understood.

He consequently enlisted in the Australian Flying Corps on the 2nd of November, 1916, and was sent with considerable recommendations to the Point Cook training school near Melbourne. He soon showed his mettle, and having risen to the rank of Sergeant by his very grit and push, outside his expert knowledge, he was chosen along with six others of his rank for the Central Flying School. He was commissioned on the 1st May, 1917, and on the 21st June he was sent to England for further training at Reading. He received his wings in February, 1918. He was then transferred to the R.A.F. and joined the Central Despatch Pool. His duty was the most dangerous one of machine-testing at factories and later the flying of all manner of machines to Ireland, Scotland and France. He flew over 2,000 hours in all types of aeroplanes, flying-boats and seaplanes. After doing splendidly and the War being

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definitely over, he was released for work pending demobilisation.

He entered for the £10,000 prize for the flight to Australia and for 18 months he did his utmost to get a machine for that flight. He wished to have his own aeroplane but at the various manufacturers he visited he was unsuccessful, though most of them were prepared to offer him the post of pilot, and indeed he was piloting the Alliance, which crashed at Surbiton after he gave her up for some reason, and the Kangaroo, which later crashed at Suda Bay. He was also pilot on Beardmore's F.E. Each of these machines did not satisfy him for one or other reason, which amounted to a structural defect. The splendid Alliance machine, for example, was given up by Parer because he did not consider the fuselage strong enough. This machine carried 840 gallons of aviation spirit, sufficient to carry her 3,300 miles, her consumption being 28 gallons per 110 miles. The Kangaroo carried 600 gallons and though a splendid machine apparently in every way, the far-seeing mind and alert eye of Parer turned her down, while many men with twice the years of experience held her to be perfect and quite able to pick up the prize if throttled back the maximum.

Raymond Parer may have been hard to please, but being a born aviator and engineer he knew by instinct the factors for and against and was not prepared to give the benefit of any doubt to engine, fuselage or any part of the whole. So we find him seeing the

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machines he had turned down, crashing, and many of his flying friends passing out. It seemed to be uncanny, and it is no exaggeration to say that an aeroplane turned down by Parer was one doomed to be without a pilot for a long flight. Had Parer not acted wisely he would have been among those who added their names to the list of aviators upon whose records rest the supremacy of Britain in the air. Having tried everywhere to get a machine for the flight without success, the Australian authorities notified him that his leave was to be cancelled. This was done, and he was sent to the Repatriation Dépôt at Sutton Veney.

The day he arrived there marks the turning point in his flying career, for on that day he met Lieutenant John Cowe McIntosh.

LIEUTENANT JOHN COWE MCINTOSH was born on the 24th of February, 1895, at the village of Lumsden, near Aberdeen. He was educated at Pollock's Institution at Crieff and at Inverness. He was of an athletic turn of mind and went in hard, and while a youngster he distinguished himself more in the field than in the class-room. At an early age he was articled to an architect, but sedentary occupation did not suit him and he went off to Edinburgh to find a post for himself. Things were not quite what the staunch young Scot thought and he soon found that there were more kicks than halfpence in the world.

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Being young, strong, sufficiently educated and spirited, he set out in the world with the certainty in his mind that he would make good in no time and show his schoolmates the way. After being buffeted about in his anxiety to find a berth of the sort he wanted, without success, he applied to Denham and Co. for a billet and found one at their saw-mills at Portobello. He stuck this work a few months and then returned to his father's timber-yards at Pitcairn Green, just outside Perth. He had been a bad boy for having sought fortune against the parental wish, and as the roving spirit again took hold of him he decided to leave his father's business and search fortune still further afield.

He set out for London with the purpose of shipping to Australia, and not having sufficient money, he signed on and worked his passage on the s.s. "Ormuz" of the Oriental Steam Navigation Company, since absorbed by the P. and O. His position would have been much better, as a passenger, had it not been for the fact that a London "shark" went through him for all the money he had the evening he arrived in the Great Smoke. So on the "Ormuz" he went penniless.

Signed on to Fremantle as an ordinary seaman, John McIntosh had time to think over the confidence man at the Docks and the very hard world in which he was one of the smallest atoms. His natural spirit for adventure was by no means damped and many a night he told the stories of his ups and downs in his unsophisticated way to his messmates, most of whom had been



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through them years and years before. He saw fortune awaiting him with open arms in Australia and he made up his mind that in a very short space of time he would have his own farm and all the good things which he had read were offered to workers in the great country he had chosen for his home and hunting-ground. Arrived at Fremantle with a few shillings, hard earned every one of them, he lost no time in applying for any position which he thought would suit him and the knowledge he had at his command. He found that Australia was not the rosy country flowing with milk and honey as some employment tout had pointed out to him in London. There were no "jobs" in fair Fremantle or in Perth, or anywhere so far as McIntosh could learn. The little money he had earned on the voyage out was rapidly disappearing in the purchase of the bare necessities of life, and his Scotch instinct could devise no method for stemming the outward flow any further than he had stemmed it.

One day he heard that there was work to be got in the timber business at a place called Bridgetown, so off went the stalwart Scot, bought a ticket and landed at that sylvan spot with half a crown in his pocket, only to find that the work was not handling timber but cutting it on contract at so much a cord of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  tons. By no means downhearted, McIntosh set off to interview the contractor, who handed him a facer when he said: "You must buy your own tools." The question, "Will you not advance the money to do so?" brought the reply that

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contractors never advanced money for tools. Friendless and with but half a crown in his pocket, McIntosh was indeed stumped, but he found a storekeeper who was sport enough to supply the tools on credit. Next morning McIntosh was hard at work on a patch of timber which was allotted to him.

McIntosh was a strong broth of a lad and perhaps he went in too hard, for it was not long before his hands were so blistered that it was a matter of sheer impossibility for him to get his fingers to close round the axe handle. The trees he slew were still in the rough and no sleepers had been put aside for measurement. The storekeeper was again approached for the necessities of life and after he had inspected the day's work he said laconically, "You'll do, come along with me," and there followed a good dinner and the offer of a bed, which was accepted on the understanding that the storekeeper was to recover all costs out of the first cheque. For a few days little was done, besides light trimming, pending the healing of the blister wounds, but when they did heal and his hands became fit for work, McIntosh soon established himself, and the storekeeper's "You'll do" was justified. After a few months the name of McIntosh spread through the Bridgetown camp as a champion axeman and few cared to measure girths against him for money. He topped the pay-roll for many a month and conquered many a dour axeman in open competition. None could sharp an axe with him, and besides the £5 to £8 which he earned weekly by his axe strength,

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he added as much sharpening the tools of others in the cool hours of the evening after the day's work was done.

By and by the roll of the War clouds was heard even in the timber-cutting camps and one of the first to hear it was McIntosh. News came through one day that the Huns had violated the pact with Belgium and that War with Britain must ensue.

In the particular camp where was the shack of McIntosh, were Germans, and one of them, a particularly pugnacious Hun, who had for some time previously been trying to alienate the affections of the camp on behalf of his Fatherland, called out "Der Tag." McIntosh knew no German but he felt that the words meant something nasty and in no time there was a rough and tumble, really caused by one of the Germans saying that he would personally knock out a dozen "rooineks," after his explanation of "Der Tag" was not accepted. The first of the dozen he met was McIntosh, who left him on the ground, no fit opponent for the other eleven. McIntosh threw up wood-cutting at once, squared up his accounts and sought his horse. The animal would not be caught, so after chasing him for an hour he set off on foot for the town seven miles away with the set intention of joining up and getting to the Front as early as possible. There were delays however, in the foolish idea that the hard worker McIntosh was not fit to fight. He had a bad tooth or something of the kind.

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On the 4th September, 1914, he was passed fit and went off with the first unit to Egypt. He would have gone passed or not and had made arrangements to do so. He had three months' training at Heliopolis and entrained at Cairo for Alexandria with his unit on an hour's notice. None knew what was afoot. They were as suddenly shipped to Lemnos, where they had more intensive training until on the 25th April, 1915, the units were embarked on battleships, cruisers, torpedo boats, tugs and all sorts of vessels, at night. Before anyone knew what was happening they were landing under a hell of fire at Anzac Cove at daybreak. The landing was a terrific affair under big gun and machine-gun fire. The Turks had splendid observers and the death-roll was appalling. Strong men were told off as stretcher-bearers from the front lines and McIntosh was one of them, and he did five months in Shrapnel Gully, where he was slightly wounded and contracted enteric fever. He did not notice the fever and took on further duty at Walker's Ridge, a hell-fire spot. The fever got him down after eight months' service (between Shrapnel Gully and Walker's Ridge), into which there are crammed sufficient experiences to fill a book much bigger than this. He was evacuated to Imbros, then Lembros and Malta. One day he may write his story of the evacuation.

He was sent to England and arrived in London during a Zeppelin raid. He left hospital after a few weeks and had a month's leave with his people, after

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which he rejoined and was classed C. He was too keen to leave the service and as he wanted to join the Air Force he made repeated applications. After great difficulties were overcome he got to France and the Somme. He was there for eight months and studied the effect of German bombs on every possible occasion. He invented a bomb and after repeated failures to have it noticed and after a dozen applications for entry into the Flying Corps had been pigeon-holed, he one day ran across a Staff Officer who saw him at work on his invention in a newly made bomb hole, where he was observing right out in front of the trenches. The Staff Officer, who later on was to play an important part in McIntosh's flying business, here sent for him, saw the bomb and immediately sent him on with a letter to the bomb expert of the Army Corps. The bomb was diagnosed and the expert came to the conclusion in five minutes that there was a great deal in it. In ten minutes he asked McIntosh if he would go to England to build the original bombs, or if he preferred to join the Flying Corps. He chose the latter, was sent to England and evidently the wires were pulled ; for he was passed fit through the strictest medical examination as laid down for Flying Corps aspirants. He was sent to the Flying School at Oxford, then to the training squadron at Leighterton. When ready for the Front the Armistice was signed and all flying stopped.

Very quickly demobilisation was afoot and those who were pivot men or men worthy of training at Government

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expense were offered freedom from service or civil training. University courses were offered and McIntosh, who tried to interest various people in a project to fly a machine to Australia or anywhere, without success, put in for a course of forestry at the Edinburgh University. He was accepted, and after five months he passed out with the full diploma and was sent to Salisbury Plain. He renewed his efforts to get into an aeroplane on the flight to Australia while he was pending repatriation, and one day he met Lieutenant Raymond Parer, at Sutton Veney, in whom he found a kindred flying spirit. They decided to join forces. Here we find the deep-thinking engineer pilot, one of the best Britain produced, and the hard-headed but nevertheless breezy, sporting Scot, hand in hand, and without money determined to find a way to fly to Australia, the birthplace of the one and the adopted home of the other. They had £100 or so ready for the Aero Club entrance fee for the flight and along set lines they worked after paying that entry into the Club. The balance of their slender resources was conserved and they looked round for someone to put up a sufficiently large extra sum to buy and equip a machine. Permission to get busy was readily got and both set out to see the aviation magnates. The firm of Parer and McIntosh now proceed with their story.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE NARRATIVE.

WE approached the leading manufacturers and builders of aeroplanes with a view to getting such a machine as we could with confidence attempt the flight from London to Australia. Each of us had personally tried most of the firms and in most cases it was our joint opinion that we were being put off from day to day, by persons who should have known better, until the results of the flights of the machines which had already started should be known, at least to Egypt. As each machine fell out of the race our chances of getting one grew greater. This fact we noticed most markedly and one of the heads who used to meet us with the icy eye went so far as to extend his hand to both of us the day after the news of a certain crash. We hope one day to have our own back from that gentleman to a much greater degree than we got it on the bright morning when we were able to tell him our opinion of his firm and himself. He had wasted three clear good weeks of ours putting us off from day to day, getting us to test his machines (many of which we would not touch as they were obviously weak) and sucking our brains as far as he could on every occasion he invited us to his office to discuss the proposed flight.

We were a couple of down and out shuttlecocks being knocked about anywhere at the hands of makers of all

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manner of flying machines. We tried the Gosport Boat Co., a seaplane company, Beardmore's, and a whole lot of opulent concerns, without success. None of them said definitely "We don't want you and we don't want to send a machine on such a flight," but they said "Come again in three days and by then we'll have seen the other Directors," and after three days of anxious waiting we, or one of us, went along for the momentous decision, to find that "The Directors could not decide on such short notice; we will write you." As a matter of absolute fact we discovered later that the Directors had never met and that the matter was never discussed as it was considered a much too Quixotic proposition—this offer of ours to fly to the end of the world to make the name of an aeroplane. We were not quite paupers and on most occasions we offered to put all the necessary folldolls on the aeroplane at our own expense. We had earned a considerable sum by way of army pay and there was a gratuity apiece to draw on. Separately we could do nothing after paying the £100 entry fee, but jointly we had a sum which we considered would carry us to Australia and pay for the trimmings we would put on any aeroplane supplied to us free by any maker who wanted advertisement.

London is an expensive city and a difficult one to get about in. We were strangers and consequently paid the highest possible price for everything. Our resources were rapidly being absorbed by the great sponge we were up against and we began to despair of ever coaxing the



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hard, closefisted millionaires who made their millions through the killing of such men as ourselves, to supply the machine we so badly wanted. They or most of them had no faith either in us or in the machines which had in the past been good enough to supply to Government, and good enough for the likes of us to risk our necks upon when bombing the enemy. We shall not forget the rebuffs or the putting off we suffered, and we did swear at the persons who were breaking us as each day brought us so much nearer to the end of our finances. We might drag on here and tell dozens of quite interesting anecdotes of man's inhumanity. Most of our readers have felt it at some period of their lives and we are told by our Editor that such anecdotes are common property.

We know what was the matter now. We were so enthusiastic about the flight we wanted to carry out that we thought that the makers of machines would jump at our offers to fly for them for nothing. When they put us off, our feeling that they wanted us grew stronger. When they sent word to "Call in a couple of days' time," our spirits, and particularly the spirit of the Scot, rose up in us and ousted every doubt which lurked in the mind of Parer. As a matter of fact we did not sit down and discuss the position from the aeroplane-maker's point of view, because he had throughout led us on, pulled our leg, in order that we might hang on until the very last of the entrants for the great race had crashed or otherwise been put *hors de combat*. One bright day we

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two, Scot and Australian, decided to sit down and review the position. We decided that we should give the business two days' further trial in one quarter, and then accept a very bad offer, which we believed was genuine, if we did not succeed in the quarter wished for by both of us.

Within an hour of this decision we were informed by the Australian Headquarters that as we had done nothing we should report in 48 hours for repatriation. This was a terrible blow after all the work we had done to get a machine. Pressure had to be put on and we had another Council of War, when we decided to find a man to buy an old Army machine from the Disposals Board, we to use our money for the fixing of it up to flying pitch and he to have the full use of the machine for advertisement purposes. The idea seemed good, and before finding the man who would put up the money we again went to the Disposals Board, where we were very well known, as our waiting hours were spent there going over all the machines which were offered for sale. There were few machines and few articles of moment in the £100,000,000 of aeroplanes and aeroplane tackle, which we had not seen. All sorts of rubbish were heaped together and hundreds of machines worn to the last five minutes of their engines, and some of them of no value whatever except to relatives of people they had killed. The flotsam and jetsam of the whole of the great air machines of Great Britain lie huddled at the various yards of the Disposals Board. Here and there

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in all this aero chaff there are occasional grains worth while and we discovered them with the aid of some of the men in charge who had served with us. It was all very well bringing our choice down to one of three machines, but we could do nothing without the cash to pay for the one we finally decided upon. When young men wish for a thing they will go along and look at it and look at it again before setting out to get the wherewithal necessary for its purchase. And so it was with us; we gained our courage to go on from a look at the machine we wanted.

We had heard of one or two of the great profiteers who were spending cash pretty lavishly on ridiculous things, so we approached them. They treated us well and offered to give us a good time, plenty of champagne and all that sort of thing but they would not open out on an aeroplane. They suggested that we should go to the manufacturers, who, they said, would jump at the offers we had to make. When we said that we had approached manufacturers but had been put off from day to day, our profiteers sniffed and suggested that there must be something wrong. Ross Smith and Mathews were now the only competitors in the race and a certain firm, to whom we telephoned on the particular afternoon when we approached the profiteers, put it straight to us that if either one of these two went out in the next twenty-four hours we should be given a machine. We wished the manager to go to Hell on the telephone and determined that we would sooner sail in a wind-jammer

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to Australia than assist those gamblers in human lives to get an aeroplane there. Tired out, we went into the Regent's Palace Hotel to get some refreshment and were discussing between us how we could raise the wind to get the service machine which might yet win the £10,000 prize. We did not like the machine Mathews was driving but we or rather Parer knew that Ross Smith's machine was a champion and that engines had been sent forward for emergency purposes. This evening, Ross Smith was at Karachi and Mathews at Cologne. Scot and Australian, we were sitting down trying to force our brains to give us something which we might turn to account. Necessity is truly the mother of invention and a man is always much more inventive when hard up than otherwise. "Parer's Engine for Sale." Such an advertisement in the *Times* with a statement underneath that two young aviators would sell a new type of engine for a second-hand aeroplane, was decided upon, when an officer walked up to us and greeted McIntosh with the heartiest courteous formula we had heard for many a day. He was Lieutenant G. H. Thornton, lately in charge of non-military employment matters in Scotland. McIntosh and he were close friends and we decided to put our position and our desire before Thornton. It was done in a few minutes and frills were added in form of the treatment we had received at the hands of certain manufacturers. Thornton gave his advice in one minute, and in three minutes it was decided that McIntosh should go straight to Glasgow with him, and in five

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minutes we were in a taxi bound for the great railway station and McIntosh was on his way to see Mr. Peter Dawson, the great distiller, as the protégé of Thornton.

Next day Mr. Dawson was met and extended the greatest kindness and sympathy in our venture or, rather, project, for such it then was. He made no bones about the share he would take in the proposal made to him and, in McIntosh's words, "I was astounded at the great open-heartedness of the man and at his spontaneous sympathy in what he was pleased to call the very brave adventure we proposed to carry through." He called his Private Secretary, Mr. Campbell, and related to him all that had passed at the interview. Mr. Campbell was equally interested, and after a moment's consideration Mr. Dawson asked, "How much do you boys want?" The reply was a certain sum, and forthwith Mr. Dawson produced a cheque form, wrote something on it, signed it and handed it to McIntosh with the remark "Buy the machine." We may here separate our joint account and allow McIntosh to tell the story of what followed in his own way.

Mr. Dawson asked me whether I and my partner had sufficient knowledge to carry through such an enormous work if the machine stood up to it. I replied, Yes. He then asked if the machine we had set our minds upon was all that we required and if we were certain that she would see us through? My reply was, Yes. At this juncture I looked at the cheque. I had

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asked for a certain amount and that figuring on the cheque was a round figure nearly double that for which I had asked. Needless to say my balance had gone. I never possessed so much money in my life and never hoped to be put in immediate possession without any obligation to repay, either agreed upon or inferred. I had no words to thank Mr. Dawson, nor could I collect my thoughts sufficiently to sensibly reply to his questions. He saw my confusion and pulled me out. He put into my being the greatest confidence and received my assurances that we would repay his great kindness, with a fitting remark which placed me quite at my ease. At this moment, in the presence of such a man, my mind flew back to the days of unsuccessful toil Parer and myself had passed and to Parer sitting down at Sutton Veney or battling in London with one or other of those who were promising support soon. In my opulent position I thought of the splendour attached to the certainty of our being able to go to the leg-pullers and tell them to go to blazes with their machines.

After a few minutes' further conversation with Mr. Dawson, I excused myself in order to get to the telegraph office, from which I might transmit my splendid news to Parer. Mr. Dawson's parting words, "My boy, I leave it to you, do your best," rang in my ears as I speeded south to rejoin Parer.

We were, both of us, in the seventh heaven of delight as we pushed off next day to close for the machine at the Aircraft Disposal Board's Depôt. We went over the

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machines we had picked out and very nearly decided to take an F.E. 2 B. fitted with a 160-H.P. Beardmore engine, in place of the D.H. 9. We however thought it over and on adding up the pros and cons we turned it down and took the D.H. 9 fitted with the Siddeley Puma 6-cylinder vertical 240-H.P. engine.

Immediately we made it known to our friends at the Depôt, they were all agog and all anxious to help us in every way. They knew that it was entirely through the munificence of Mr. Dawson that we were able to stand there in the depôt as buyers of the best machine they had to sell, and the reader may well imagine that we did not get anything but the best at the hands of the good fellows, who were as deeply interested in the venture under the new circumstances as we were ourselves. There was a drink to the health of Peter Dawson that afternoon before we parted company with our depôt friends and next day D.H. 9 was a well-fitted machine. It may be that we got a better deal and better fittings and spares than we should have got had we been rich buyers. Prices of aeroplanes were high and one really suitable for our journey to Australia with certain comforts which an airman wants on a long journey was right away up beyond our means, but we got a really solid machine and, more than that, we had men on our side who would see that any little extra which they might push into her would be pushed in; even at the risk of discovery and the inevitable charge which would be made against the pay-book.

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It did not take us long to get the machine cleaned up and have the letters P.D. prominently painted on her main plane and body. "P.D." was now the name of the aeroplane and the christening took place in the orthodox manner. The rigging of the machine was undertaken and excellently carried out at the No. 3 Salvage Dépôt, East Croydon, by Mr. Moore, who was in charge there. He entered into the spirit of the affair and his men were as much interested in the machine as we were. Our greatest thanks are due to Mr. Moore and his staff for the very careful work put into the "P.D." and for the installation of the additions we had decided upon. On December 29th, 1919, we intended to start and all arrangements were made so to do. Mr. Campbell came from Glasgow specially to see us off, and with him Mr. Johnson, of Mr. Peter Dawson's London Office, who had extended every possible help to us. These friends with others congregated at Hounslow awaiting our arrival by air from the Salvage Dépôt. We got to Waddon, the Dépôt end, at 4 A.M., and on our way to Hounslow we found that certain small matters still required attention before we could set off with safety. We should have gone on to Hounslow to show ourselves and then have returned to the Salvage Dépôt, but such a trip, though short, would have cost more money than we could afford, so we swung round and landed again on our patch of the aerodrome. We had to make excuses and we did so without exposing the real reason for our non-arrival. We had underestimated



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the costs of fitting and rigging the aeroplane and we had certain strengtheners put in which cost us a good deal more than we thought they would do. After giving instructions to the Salvage Depôt we returned to London, and at the Officers' Club we were told that two telegrams had been received for us, and in case their receipt might knock us over we were informed of their contents and shown a way out. They were from the Australian Headquarters and were to the effect that we must postpone our flight until permission had been received from the Defence Department in Australia. Had we been able to get away, there would have been no reason why the telegrams should not have remained on the racks, but the small attentions required a day, so we saw Mr. Campbell and Mr. Johnson, who advised us not to hurry our work but to do it thoroughly. Next day we were ready for the flight and went to the Australian Headquarters, where we were informed that there was a feeling that we might be killed, and that as Ross Smith had already won the prize we were out of it. There was also news that Mathews was at Constantinople. We later replied to the telegram, "Received and instructions noted." We had had two great knocks that day but were glad to hear that Ross Smith had arrived in Australia safely, though he washed out all our hopes of picking up the rich prize.

The next thing which exercised us was as to whether the Australian Government would stop us from starting. Day after day we went to the Australian Headquarters

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in search of news. None came, and after a fortnight we were thoroughly tired of waiting and our money was about finished. On the 5th of January we decided to do something rash if no word came for us to proceed, and on the 6th we took the "P.D." across to Hounslow. There was a very heavy fog and we were not seen. Our first attempt to go to Hounslow was laughed at and it was said that the real reason we did not reach there was that we had lost our way. In our next trial flight to go over Hounslow we started late and on returning in the dark we had to land at Wimbledon. This little expedition showed the officials that we were not quite such amateurs as they thought. We slept in the machine and were provided with tea and cakes by a Miss Joyce, whose brother was an aviator and was killed in France. She saw us looking for a suitable landing-spot, and upon settling down she discovered our landing-place and produced the refreshments. Next morning we cut through a fence and as the take-off was bad, one of us remained behind and went to the Salvage Dépôt on foot. Our third flight on "P.D." was made on the 6th January and we left her at Hounslow, filled up and ready for the flight to Australia. On the morning of the 7th we proceeded to the Australian Headquarters. "No permission through," was the laconic answer to our question. We told Major Coleman that we were very tired of the strain of waiting and that if we did not push off we should run into bad weather. He told us to hang on.

## CHAPTER II.

ON the 8th we were up at daylight all ready and we started from Hounslow on our own responsibility. All our friends were there and they kept our decision, to clear out, very quiet. Mr. Campbell and Mr. Siddeley, the maker of the Puma engine, were much interested, but the speech of Mr. Siddeley led us to believe that he had not much faith in the little engine taking us through or else in our own ability to stand the strain, or it may have been that he felt that we were not properly equipped financially for such a flight. Whatever it was, there was borne in on us the feeling that Mr. Siddeley was by no means optimistic as to the result of our venture. He had supplied us with an expert mechanic at the Salvage Depôt and had deposited £100 with the Air Ministry for the supply of the petrol which we might require en route. The Air Ministry did not consider this sufficient when it was well known that we were "stony broke" and on our last legs. Mr. Johnson, at the instance of Mr. Peter Dawson, soon put this right and established an unlimited guarantee. He duplicated this guarantee to the Asiatic Petroleum Company in case the Air Ministry could not supply us either before or beyond Karachi. We handed a letter to one of our friends for delivery to the Australian Headquarters in

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Fosbery Road, in which we told the G.O.C., A.I.F. Depôt, that we were starting on our flight to Australia on our own responsibility, that our military history would bear the closest scrutiny, and that we hoped he would take the letter in the spirit it was written. There was a shaking of hands, wishes for our bon voyage, and at 10-30 A.M., precisely, we left the ground on our long flight. Though we had no means of communicating with one another, the galaxy of thought which passed through our minds was much the same. Here we were, on the wing, bound for Australia, with practically no money, and depending on a single engine to take us through. But there was something in the way of a twin human engine ready to work when required to do so, and we by no means lost sight of its power to win through if the petrol-driven affair should stop. We had however unbounded faith in our "Puma," and the rather despondent attitude of Mr. Siddeley, the maker, had left no lowering impression on our minds. So thoroughly well did we know the engine that we were certain that if anything did go wrong or if any weakness were discovered, we would be able to tinker her up and go on. Behind the whole of the extraordinary circumstances leading up to our departure on the great adventure, there loomed into the minds of both of us, through his two representatives who bade us bon voyage and God's speed, the great personality of Peter Dawson, and we were certain that his good wishes would ever be present with us.

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We buzzed along for a while full of all kinds of feelings, which the reader can imagine better than we can tell them, and in a flash, so it seemed, we were over the Medway at Maidstone, thence along the railway over Lenham, Charing, Wye, with the Stour, a thin thread, below us. The Channel was in sight and at 10-55 we were over Folkestone. The weather was very rough and there were low clouds which caused us to rise to 5,000 feet to clear. Signals were against cross channel aviators and flying had been stopped. On we went and what a buffeting poor little "P.D." got. However, on we had to go and at 11-10 we were over Cap Gris Nez. Fifteen short minutes across the Channel, which seemed an interminable journey as we rolled almost out of control in the great air-storm with its enormous unseen but fully felt waves. About here we descended to 4,000 feet and got into a terrific gale. We steered south-west but we achieved south. We passed straight down the coast leaving Wimmereux on our port, over Boulogne, past the mouths of the Canche at Paris Plage, the Authie, the Somme at St. Valery sur Somme and then along the Somme to Abbeville. The wind-torn country below was by no means inviting. Our air speed had been showing 85 miles per hour at 1,200 revolutions, throttled back. The ground speed was 60 miles per hour with the wind right in our faces. After leaving the coast the wind speed increased and the air became still more bumpy and dangerous. In front were clouds which would compel ascent or descent

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and it was considered advisable to fly beneath them. We did so and ran into a terrific rainstorm at 500 feet. It was certain that had we flown in the clouds we should have lost all sense of direction. Not wishing to turn back, we went through the storm until quite suddenly we entered a cloud bank which rested on the ground. All visibility was obscured and so we had to turn and rise to regain it. Just what we went through in these few minutes we could not put to paper. Our thoughts were jumbled and there was uppermost the possibility or probability, we might say, of a crash thus early on our flight. The rush of wind was terrific. It was necessary to make the best landing we could and we did so near Conteville at 12-10. We searched for the best piece of ground for the landing, but travelling at about 85 miles per hour with low visibility it is no easy matter to pick and choose. However, while we knew perfectly well that we should not be able to land by any means comfortably, we hoped for the best, and had it not been that just at the psychological moment a side gust caught us, we should have landed on the most unfavourable field without mishap. As it was we had a bump or two, damaged the right wheel and strained the undercarriage, the struts of which were split on the right side. We tied the "P.D." down, arranged for some French police to look after her, and accepted the invitation of M. and Madame Terrade, of the Conteville School, for lunch. These two people were very kind indeed to us during our enforced stay at their town. We

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had beds fixed up in the school, and next morning Parer went off to Rouen to get a wheel and the necessary pieces to patch up the struts. From Abbeville to Rouen via Neuchatel is not so far but it takes a long while under present conditions of travel by railway in France. At Rouen no wheel could be got and it was necessary to go on to Paris. Meanwhile McIntosh was busy making a plate in the local smithy of Conteville for the repair of the split strut. It rained and stormed incessantly for five days, and the terrific storm which scourged England and France was felt in no small measure at the little out of the world town of Conteville.

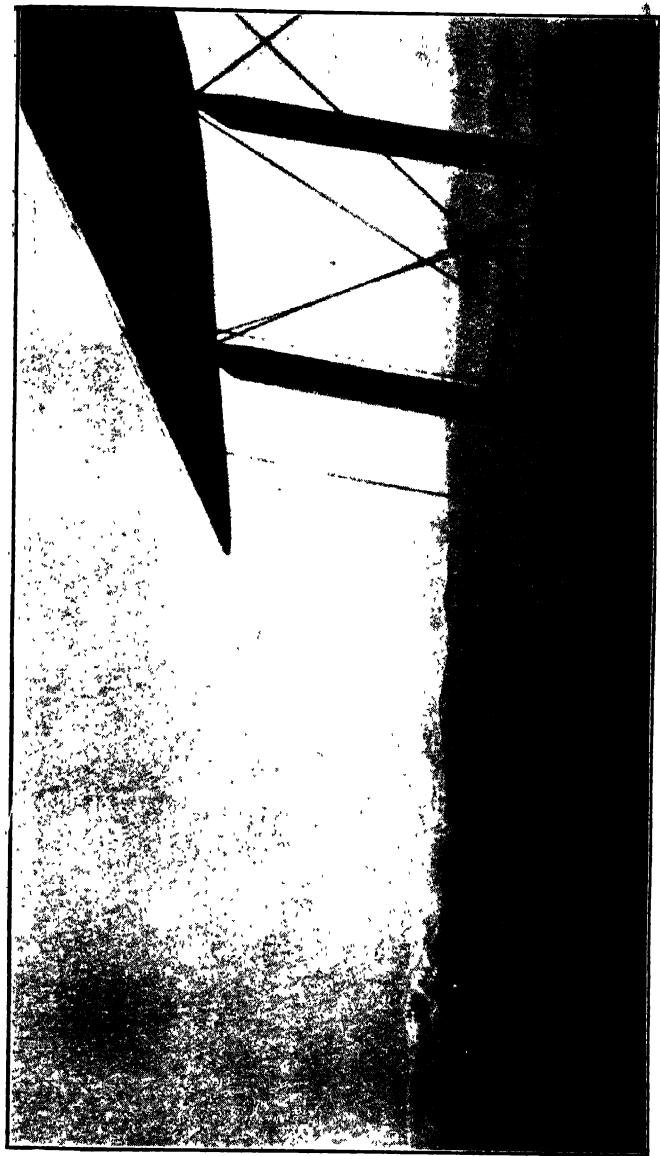
On the night of the 10th, Parer returned with a wheel. It was impossible to proceed owing to weather conditions being so bad when the wheel was fitted, but at 10-20 A.M., on the 14th, there was an opportunity and though the "P.D." had to take off cross wind owing to the bad nature of the field, the operation was safely carried out, and after an extremely bumpy passage Le Bourget aerodrome, Paris, was reached at 11-20 A.M. The flight was at heights of 1,000 to 2,000 feet. The whole of the Seine Valley was flooded. A good landing was made and the machine was housed in a half-blown-down hangar.

We set about getting our petrol supplies into the tanks and in the half-light of the hangar it seemed to us that the spirit had rather a pearly look about it now and again. Too late we discovered that it had been



PARIS—EIFFEL TOWER.





THE ALPS FROM COAST, 30 MILES DISTANT.

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adulterated with water, either by design or through some unaccountable accident. We had no one to help us and felt tired out that night when we finished filling up and doing a few of the usual running repairs and adjustments. We proceeded to Paris and stopped the night of the 14th January at the Hotel Gare du Nord.

This was our first free experience of Paris and we enjoyed it immensely. It was not long before some Parisian Press reporters were looking for us and one or two followed us from Le Bourget, anxious to get from us any matter we cared to give them *re* our flight. One who spoke some English said that every one connected with aviation marvelled at our powers, or rather the dare-devil in us, for having made the passage from London in such weather. They also wondered why we did not send to London for the wheel we so badly wanted. We could have enlightened them quite satisfactorily as to why we preferred to get it at a much higher price in La Belle France, but we did not. We wished to be incognito until well out of this part of the world, for there were such things as telegraph wires and we trusted that all the reporters said of the terrible storm might be true so far as the breaking of telegraphic communication with England was concerned. There was much talk of the Professor Porta predictions, and even these did not interest us anything like so much as the possibility of getting a wire from England to stop or to otherwise cripple our flight for

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the time being. After a while it seemed to us that we were taken as supermen or something of the kind, as aviators of great experience came to do us homage. There was nothing so ridiculous, and we put it down to the complimentary fashion prevalent in France. We had certainly weathered a storm, but it was nothing to us. We had much greater things in our minds and were glad when we could get to bed and be free from the questions of reporters and the gay glances of the opposite sex, who in a very short space of time filled the lounge to look at us as if we were some extraordinary sort of animal. We were introduced to some of the ladies who were "air mad," and one of us had the greatest difficulty in getting to our joint slumber-box. We both got there, however, and were well satisfied with the good treatment we received at the hands of the Parisians of the Gare du Nord quarter.

Next morning we went to the Bedford Hotel in the Rue d'Arcade, and from there to Le Bourget at 9 A.M. We tested the petrol and emptied the lot from the tanks and strained it before refilling. There was a great deal of water present. We returned to the Bedford in the evening and were again subjected to the questions of all kinds of reporters, and even Englishmen were of the party. We were invited to the Folies Bergere and other places, and some of our new friends were most anxious for us to allow them to show us some of the Paris they knew. While we had the time we were glad to avail ourselves of some

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of the opportunities offered to us, and the Scot element of our firm went one way and the Australian the other, so that the greatest possible extent of ground might be covered.

Next morning we were up early and out at the aerodrome before there was any movement there. On bringing the machine from the hangar for a test we found that the petrol pump was out of action. This was due to the swelling of the two fabric fins owing to the presence of the water in the spirit. From what we heard it was clear that the spirit had been doctored by a thief. We should have shot him had we been able to find him. It was necessary to cut a hole through the main plane to get the pump out, and that caused a delay which we particularly wished to avoid. The weather was good for flying, and all the precious hours which might have been utilised in getting us as far as possible from England being lost, we had to return to Paris again, and took the opportunity of taking a lot of photos of the interesting monuments and quarters of the city prior to a start in the morning. We visited several places of amusement and had refreshments under the Eiffel Tower. Later we went up the funicular railway to a very old Italian restaurant frequented by artists and journalists round the corner from the church of Sacré Cœur. At this restaurant, noted for its wonderful Asti Spumante, we were discovered by some Italian journalists, who were strong after "copy" as to where we would land in

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Italy. We got to our hotel early and had a good night's rest. We were ready early on the 17th to leave the aerodrome but a heavy fog prevented us from getting away until 11-30, when we took the wing for Lyons. The weather was splendid, with a good sky-line, and we steered S.E. between 5,000 and 6,000 feet. We were able to take many aerial photos and we enjoyed the first good day we had had since leaving Hounslow. The country below showed up splendidly. We crossed the Seine at Melun, then the Loing, and so we went on over most beautiful country, spotted with the chateaux of the rich, to Courtenay. Passing many canals of the great French canal system, we arrived over Toucy and in that district there seemed to be many railway lines for so comparatively slightly populated a country. Away on our right was the Loire. Clamecy was the next town we recognised, and from there we followed the canal and railway to Corbigny and so to Toulon sur Arroux. On we went until we could see the great vineyards of Beaujolais stretched out below us. All this time the view of the Alps on our port was ever becoming more splendid. The rolling hills of the Monts du Beaujolais are most beautiful from above, and the little towns such as Beaujeu, St. Vincent de Reins, at its own little rail-head, Villefranche sur Saone and the dozens of other little oases in that great district, lent a splendour to the scene under us which was the richest we had ever seen. There, straight ahead of us, were the tall chimneys

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of Lyons through which the Rhone passes. On our starboard were the Monts du Lyonnais and in front the great snow-clad massif of the Alps, which held in our faces an opposition to our flight which scared us. We were now over Lyons, and its church spires, which are the most striking things about the city from the air. The view we had of Mt. Blanc towering above the Alps like a great silver-topped pinnacle, was wonderful. We had other matters to absorb our attention and the principal of these was, could we find the Bron aerodrome through the city haze. We found it, and at 2-30 were safely on the ground and were received by French aviation officers, who were very kind to us.

### CHAPTER III.

THE Bron aerodrome is about eight miles from Lyons. We had hardly cleared ourselves of our flying kit when we were asked for our passports. As we had none we had to protect ourselves under our want of knowledge of the language and bluff our way out, which we were able to do satisfactorily. The rear petrol pump had got out of order about an hour before our arrival, and a crack in the exhaust pipe was also discovered. These two little items were fixed up and we left the aerodrome for Lyons late in the afternoon. We travelled well, in a car placed at disposal by the aerodrome authorities, and put up at the Grande Nouvelle Hotel. We had a good look round Lyons and met many people at the hands of the French aviators, who showed us their city and the good things it offered by way of amusement at night. We turned in early, and next morning we went off to the aerodrome, filled up with petrol and oil and cleaned out the oil sump. We found that the oil filter had some dirt in it and it was necessary to remove it before starting again. All was ready for the start next morning and we returned to Lyons. After dinner we went to a very fine picture show. We were much noticed, principally because our clothes were well covered with oil, grease and other dirt which cannot be separated from an aeroplane driver. After a good night we

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had breakfast and proceeded to the aerodrome. The fog was very thick at 9 A.M. and we waited for it to clear sufficiently for a start to be made. At 11-45 we got off. The French officers advised us not to leave in such a fog as it was very unsafe. There was much excitement among them when we began to taxi, but though we should very much have liked to stay a while longer, we had excellent reasons for wishing to get as far away from the English telegram, which we felt was following us, as possible. It was a very bad day. The fog covered the whole country to Marseilles, as we had been informed. We flew at 3,000 feet and saw nothing until we struck the coast at Marseilles, over which we passed at 6,000 feet at 2 P.M. Our course from this harbour, which was full of vessels and presented a very active appearance, was to Toulon, and en route we saw something of la Ciotat. The coast trip is a splendid one.

We arrived over St. Raphael at 3 P.M., and landed on the seaplane aerodrome, which is rather sandy, fifteen minutes later, having done a little tour round the beautiful scenic points of the Lower Argens basin, Cape d'Aramont and round by Frejus, in order to get photos of that delightful region. The little bay of St. Raphael and the many fine villas make an extremely pretty scene from the air. The deep blue of the Mediterranean is a striking contrast here to the same sea in the vicinity of Marseilles and on to Toulon. We were well received by the French naval officers at St. Raphael



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aerodrome and seaplane base, and were escorted by some of them to the delightful hotel known as Grand Hotel de Paris et Plage, where we were made most comfortable. We had a full afternoon to take photographs and next day we welded the crack in the exhaust pipe, mended a leak in the petrol pipe, and had to do a slight repair to the rudder, which was damaged on landing in the sand. There was rather a nasty wind blowing all day and until about noon on the 21st. This moderated somewhat and at 12-45 we took the air and set a bee-line for Nice, leaving the land at Cape Roux and passing straight across the Mediterranean, over the island of St. Marguerite, across the Gulf Juan, and over the English colony of Antibes. In the distance on our port we had a splendid view of Cannes, its villas and gardens. We went straight to sea from Antibes, but were only about ten miles from the coast and could plainly see Cagnes, Nice, with its big casino at the end of a wide jetty, Villefranche, where there were several French battleships, Monte Carlo, its casino and fine buildings right down to the water's edge and backed by the coast range, Mentone, with its pine forest, and so on until we were over the rough country between Ventimiglia and Bordighera. Here we dropped somewhat, in order to take photos of this ancient district. Behind us we could see several forts on the top of the range right back to Monte Carlo. We now crossed very interesting rock and mountainous country, leaving San Remo on our



ST. RAPHAEL, PLACE HOTEL GARDENS.



ST. PETER'S COLUMN, ROME.

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starboard. We were at about 4,000 feet and the hills below seemed to be about 2,000 feet. Oneglia stood out, an old-time city, below us, and then we stretched on over the seacoast town of Albenga, and from this point we proposed to cross the Gulf of Genoa to Leghorn. Conditions were not favourable however, and as our oil pressure had dropped from 45 lb. to 10 lb., we had to head for land and look for some sort of a landing. As the mountains dropped right down into the sea a landing was quite out of the question. When passing Savona we thought that a landing might be effected there, but on closer examination we were forced to put the thought out of our heads and to go on. Near Varazze there seemed to be another opportunity, but again scrutiny caused disappointment. The sight of the Alps away behind these two ports was a wonderful one, never to be forgotten. We rose high over the sea south of Genoa, of which city we had a splendid bird's-eye view and headed straight for Spezzia, a distance of 50 miles across the sea but close to the shore. The engine was coughing and liable to blow out and the pressure was not improving. While close to Genoa we searched for a landing-place but beyond a small patch near the large cemetery nothing offered. When near Spezzia we sighted in the distance a patch on the far side of the River Vara and close to the railway line, upon which we decided to attempt a landing. As we approached and when over Lerici we saw that there were all the indications of an aerodrome,

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and so we descended and made a good landing on what was a disused aerodrome with a hangar still in a serviceable condition. We had covered about 100 miles with very little oil, and on our landing at 3 P.M., we found ourselves in good hands at Sarzana. We quickly set to work to discover the oil leakage and found it at the filter. Our oil tanks were empty! Shortly an Italian officer turned up, along with some of his lady friends, and by sign they offered to do anything they could for us. We housed the "P.D." and were escorted to the Albergo de Viletta, where we were indeed pictures to look at in our dirty, greasy clothes. All the villagers turned out, touched and sniffed at us as strange birds. By sign we made our wants known. After we had rested a little, we were escorted round the beautifully situated town. Sarzana is snugly nestled away among the mountains, which at sunset show up the most gorgeous combination of colours. The deep purples of the valleys give way gradually, as the colour creeps up the hills, to the faintest mauve. There is a great foreshortening and the mountain sides seem to lean right over against some of the farthest houses on the outskirts of the little old town. Mount Nouvel is the principal point of note. The hills hold many very interesting old castles, forts and still more ancient ruins. Those of the natives who were intelligent enough signed to us that all the surroundings were of great antiquity. The taller peaks were snow-capped and as the sun set they received the last rays and were lit up in the brightest golden tinting. The

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ensemble and the glorious colouring set right in the foreshortening gave a most wonderful whole. We had never seen anything like it and stood and looked and looked and wondered if we were really looking at a sight in an artificial cyclorama or at one of Nature's best efforts.

The people were a good clean cut type but had very dark skins. Most of them worked either in the vineyards or the mills, and there seemed to be no other such industries. Stuck round about Sarzana in the hills are many smaller villages such a Fosdinove, and not so far away is Carrara. Mounts Pisanino and Sagro held their heads up over the surrounding peaks in the direction of Carrara. We returned to the little Albergo di Viletta just at dusk, after one of the most pleasing walks we had ever had in our lives, a walk into old Italy, and had we had an interpreter we are certain that there would have been folklore enough to keep us up all night. We cleaned up and prepared for a meal while our officer acquaintance set out to look for oil. When we had finished an extremely oily repast, we again took the outside air and were astonished to find that the streets and square were in darkness. None of the lamps were lit, and so far as we could learn, by various signs and from the groups of people whispering at the corners and on the square, they were being punished for some sort of attack they had made on the military authorities. Later we noticed that there were placards on the street houses regarding Trotsky and Lenin and that they were

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marks of the propaganda which these delightful conspirators had carried into Italy's impressionable districts. Still later we learned that there had been a fracas or two between the military authorities and the Sarzana populace, which was socialistic to a man. We went along to the railway station, which is on the main line from Genoa to Naples, and everywhere where worth while in Italy, and we found that delightfully dirty point also in darkness. We were told that owing to nobody doing any work no trains ran. So there was a railway strike in Italy and, indeed, so far as we could gather, things generally were pretty bad.

Next morning, after a good night's rest, and one of us dreaming that a dozen Italians were running knives into his side, we got a cart and drove to the aerodrome, where we fixed up the slack filter, adjusted the wires and controls and made ready for a fresh start as soon as our Italian friend should turn up with the oil. In due course he came to hand with four gallons, for which we had to pay about £6 per gallon. This price cleared us right out of cash and, indeed, we had to supplement that which we had by other means than feeling in either of our pockets. At any rate, we got the oil into the tank and started next morning, the 23rd, at 9 A.M., from Sarzana. We took with us the names of many of the inhabitants, who wrote them on our fuselage, and there were many who would have been happy had we stopped a little while longer. The little girls brought us beautiful mountain flowers, with which they set about

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gaudying our machine, and the elder ones trotted out eatables, wine, handkerchiefs and lots of other little things. By sign we promised a dozen that one day we should return. At 9-20, when at 3,000 feet, one of the carburettors commenced to flood in sight of Forte di Marmi. While we were looking for a landing—which we found in the distance—the petrol was coming back into our faces. We were making for the landing-ground we had chosen when back-firing set fire to the petrol and the wood-work of the fuselage caught fire in two places. We cut off the main petrol supply and in fear of our lives we side-slipped towards the ground and made a good landing in a boggy field, which we heard later had been an aerodrome for Caproni machines. It was right on the shore. All the people from the neighbourhood came along to see the machine and its occupants. Many of the Italians had been in America and one of them spoke quite good English. He gave us a lot of useful information about affairs generally, and told us that the Italians who had been in America returned to take their share of the fighting. In no time these Italians pulled the machine out of the boggy ground and brought food and wine to us. We fixed up the carburettor in a couple of hours and went to see the town, which was some distance off and surrounded by hills on three sides. We rose at 1 P.M., and without further incident turned our heads for Rome. We passed over Pisa and at a low altitude were able to pick out the



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Leaning Tower and managed to get a fairly good photograph of that edifice. From Pisa we headed straight over the hilly country after crossing the Arno above the railway bridge, and at 3-15 we landed on the Celli aerodrome, on the Campo Francesco Barricca, which is about half an hour by train to the central station. Upon landing, the Italian aviators were very kind to us and could not do too much for us. At once they told off mechanics, all highly trained, to attend to the aeroplane, and had we allowed them to go ahead we feel sure that they would have fitted us out with a new machine without charge. One of the pilots, Lieutenant Jerli, spoke English splendidly and he placed his services at our disposal. Our immediate need was coin of the realm, for the gentleman up-country had taken all we had when settling for the drop of oil which we were forced to get at Sarzana. We are not going to say the brand of that oil because the makers might become uppish if they heard that their oil was worth its weight in lire. The first thing we did at Santi Celli was to see our game little "P.D." properly housed and attended to, and this being done, we set off with Lieutenant Jerli to the city of the Cæsars to find the British Consul. One generally looks for the British Consul when there are money troubles, and we were no exception. We found him, told him our troubles, and then went on to the Hotel Real. It is a peculiar feeling to go into a first-class hotel like a sweeper from the streets, covered in grime and oil, and with the full

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knowledge that you have not a farthing in the world to pay the bill. It is a further peculiar feeling to wonder whether they want their bill paid daily if one had no luggage. Anyhow, we were accompanied by Lieutenant Jerli, who with a few rapidly spoken words caused flunkeys to fly round and the greatest attention to be paid to us. We did not tip anyone, naturally, and the extraordinary part of the business was that no flunkey ever suggested the requirement of a little greasing. They are probably good hands at weighing up aviators ! Well, while we were quite impecunious we were able to get a good deal of amusement out of Rome, and the dining-room that evening at the Hotel Real was indeed a gay place and we were actually subjected to many presentations of flowers, which the Scotch portion of our firm misunderstood for expressions of love at first sight on the part of the bestowers. Fortunately he could not speak a word of the language of the country or the firm might have lost one of its partners. The friends of the Italian aviators were overjoyed at seeing us and expressed themselves so in no half manner. We were lions, invited to all kinds of entertainments despite our dirty clothes.. We could not go out except on foot, as we had no intention of fattening the cocher of Rome or any of his species. We walked when alone and rode when our newly made friends invited us to do so. On 24th we went to the aerodrome and gave the necessary instructions regarding the little attentions the " P.D." required.

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Now came the serious part of the business, the raising of cash. A Consul is no fit person to hold money for those of his country who should be so unfortunate as to be without means of subsistence, and one of these days, when we are rich, we are going to establish a credit for the impecunious Englishman in some wine shop or hotel, where the Consul cannot get his fingers on it. Anyhow, we had to see the Consul again, and in our great trouble, which we masked as well as we could, we cabled to our benefactor and told him the exact position of affairs and suggested a loan to carry us on. Meanwhile we set about earning as much as possible by advice on engines, on the one hand, and by draftsman's work on the other. The firm earned something and was able to carry on until word could be received from Glasgow. In due course it came, and we then had to fight the manager of the bank to which the remittance had been sent. He was obdurate and said all sorts of things about it being possible for fake telegrams to be sent. He had had no advice and in any case we should have to be properly identified. The precious days were going fast, and all our Kodak films had been exhausted. There was nothing much to do, as we had seen nearly all the sights within our means. The position was ludicrous. Our aeroplane was out at the aerodrome ready to go on, and here were we, at the Hotel Real, living like the riches, but *sans un sous*. Certain reporters offered to buy matter suitable for their papers and some of them bought it. The

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payment made seemed to be very little in proportion to the great output from our brains measured in lines of print in the language of the country. On the 28th we saw the arrival of the Vickers Vimy commercial machine, piloted by Captain Cottle, which reached that day from England with four aboard. This machine left Rome at 12-30 for Malta but landed at Naples.

We again approached the nasty bank manager without favourable result, and we decided to go to the British Embassy. Everything goes wrong when one is hard up, and yet has absolute evidence that money has been sent to him. No one believes the story. Heard it before, we suppose! On the 30th we did so but saw no one who could help us. On the 31st we saw Captain Gordon, the Naval Attaché, and he took our word that money was to come to us and advanced the amount to us against a letter from us on the Commercial Bank. We must point out that none of the authorities knew anything about us and it was, on reflection, very good indeed of Captain Gordon to step in and lend a hand. Another Scot ready to do all he could for a countryman in trouble. We lost no time in settling our account at the Real and at once set off for the aerodrome to straighten things up there. The weather reports were bad but we fixed the morrow for our departure. When it came, we had to defer our move as the weather reports were still very bad and there was an extremely thick fog over the aerodrome, which extended to Rome.

## CHAPTER IV.

ON the 2nd of February we left the Santi Celli aerodrome at 11-40 A.M. The weather was still bad and Lieutenant Jerli recommended us to wait one day longer. This we could not do. The air was very bumpy, but we passed over Naples at 1-10 P.M., intending to go straight across to Brindisi. We circled Mount Vesuvius in order to get good photographs of the crater and actually did so, but they very nearly cost us our lives; as without any warning the aeroplane suddenly dropped from 6,000 to 5,500 feet as photographs were being taken. We were both lifted right out of our seats and all the small bolts and rubbish common to the floor of a fuselage were thrown up over our heads and dropped back on our faces. We had entered a hot current of air. The petrol rose from the bottom to the tops of the tanks with a sickening thud, and the pilot would have gone overboard had he not had a good hold of the control stick. The propeller raced at an extraordinary speed, and until the forward speed of the machine took us over the crater, the tractor did very little pulling. We had had a good sight of the crater and saw the lava formations inside. There seemed to be many terraces right down into the light smoke. The terrace formation of the lava seemed to be also the formation of the air in the vicinity of the volcano, for we bumped first

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into one and then into another of them and gradually climbed out of a sort of vortex. We flew round Naples again and had an excellent view of Civita Vecchia,—the half-moon bay, part of which is the port of Rome. Naples looked a too closely built city to be healthy. The rows of houses seemed to be divided by the narrowest streets or lanes and there were no open patches worth speaking of for so large a city. A city without lungs, we thought it. The shipping in the harbour seemed to be at rest and we supposed that a ship-workers' strike was on. We again set out on our true course. The fogs all round worried us somewhat, and after essaying a course to Taranto the weather forced us to turn round and head for the aerodrome near Naples, named St. Mart, where we landed safely at 2 P.M.

Our experiences over Vesuvius had rather shaken our nerves and perhaps it is as well that we turned and rested at St. Mart. St. Mart aerodrome is about 20 minutes by tram from Naples Station. Our actual time in the air from Rome to the landing at St. Mart was 2 hours and 20 minutes. We met some Australian soldiers when strolling about Naples after dinner. They were from the P. & O. s.s. "Osterley," which was in port, having arrived there at 6 P.M. We went to the vessel and met many whom we knew. We had a chat with the late Staff Aviation Officer of the A.F.C. in England, Colonel Brinsmead. He felt sure that we would catch Mathews and wished us every success, but did not like the type of machine we flew. Lieutenant Stoddart, of the

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D.A.A.G.'s office, was also on board and was able to tell us that permission had been given for us to undertake the flight and for that reason we were not stopped while *en route*. This news was a weight off our minds. We were told that there was a great commotion when it became known that we had taken French leave, but that the senior officers appreciated the position and were not inclined to do anything to stop us.

We felt very happy indeed, and notwithstanding Colonel Brinsmead's remarks *re* our "P.D.," we had had a sufficient experience that very day to assure us of her great strength and stability, and we would not have exchanged her for the splendid machine being flown by Mathews or that upon which Ross Smith had done his great epoch-making flight. The "Osterley" left Naples at 10 P.M., and we decided to leave next day for Athens. We plotted the approximate future position of the "Osterley" and hoped to pass her at a fixed spot in the Mediterranean in two days' time.

We left Naples next morning, at 11-40, for Brindisi. The weather was very bumpy and we went out to sea to gain height for our passage over the Appennines. We left Vesuvius about 30 miles on our port bow. We got the bumpy effect similar to that which we experienced when passing over and close to the volcano. The mountains were covered with fog and we had to climb to 14,000 feet to get above the clouds. When well above them we flew an easterly compass course. As the clouds rose, our wheels touched them

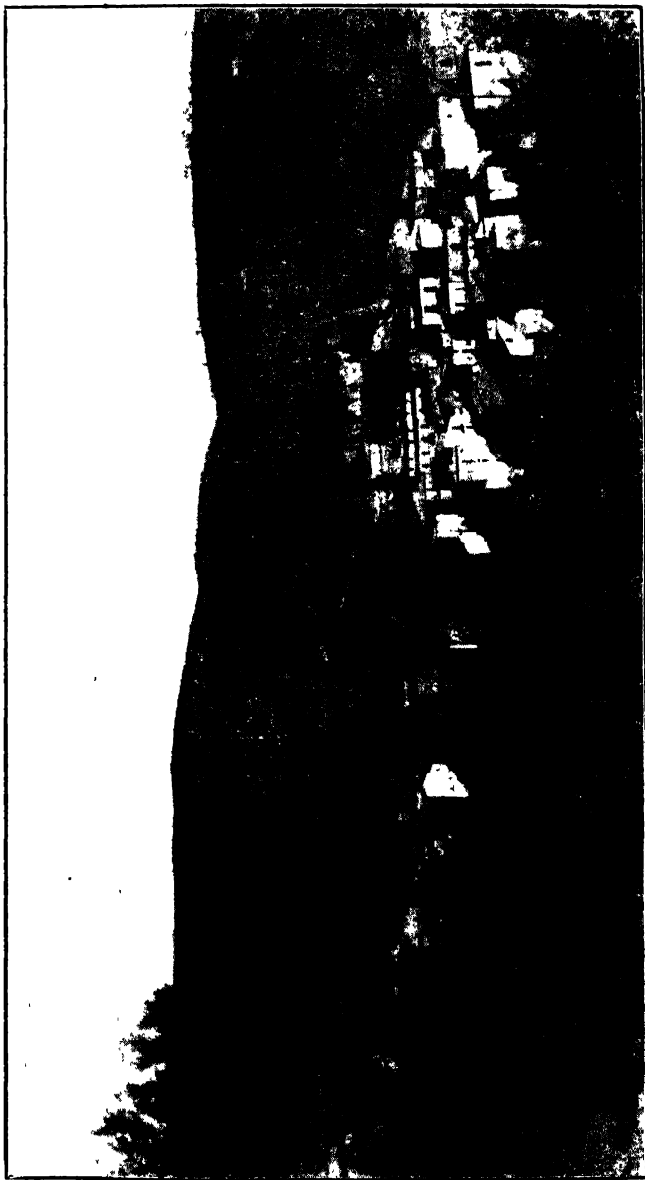
## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

and on we went in a terribly cold atmosphere—without seeing through the clouds,—hour after hour. It struck us as extraordinary that there were not two similar cloud formations. We took many photos, which will be published in our full story of the flight, and the cloud formations are clearly seen below us, for we were in first-class light above them. These conditions obtained until we were probably over Taranto. We were almost frozen and our faces covered with icicles. Our hands and faces were stiff. It was too dangerous to attempt to descend through the clouds and we were ever on the lookout for an opening. The snow-line was at about 5,000 feet and we were 10,000 feet above it when at our maximum height. Occasionally we got a low cloud-bank and snow-clad peaks pushed through. The sight was gorgeous and has not been seen by many. We strained our eyes downwards, looking for an opening as a possible way down but we got no glimpse of land anywhere. We could not move our lips and felt fearfully cold. We espied a heavy bank of black cloud rising to about 30,000 feet right in front of us and over the clouds on which we flew. This bank ran north and south and we dared not go through it or into it, for all sense of direction would leave us. We had to avoid it somehow. It seemed to swing round on us and we had to alter our course. Our oil pressure was not working too well and we had short supplies of petrol. We were in a dilemma, indeed. We flew on hoping for the best. After three hours of flight, at from 12,000

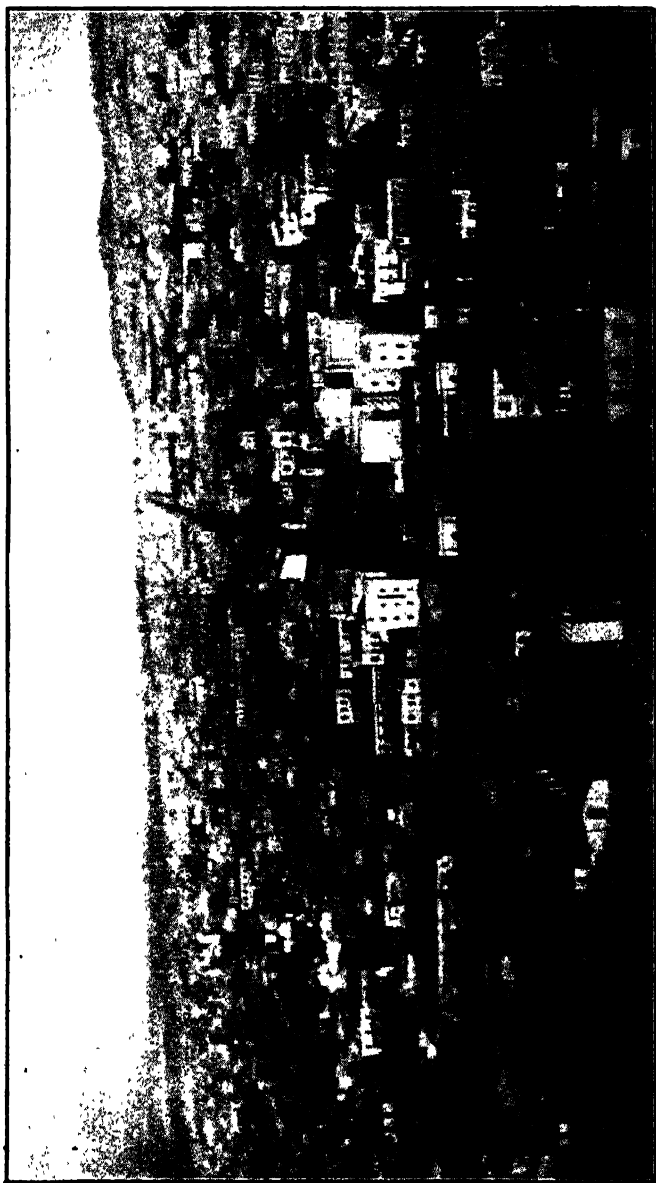


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to 15,000 feet, we caught sight of an opening in the clouds below us reaching to some high hills and the open sea. We made for this hole and came out on a clean patch on the west coast of Italy, between Stromboli and the mainland. We descended to 7,000 feet over the sea. Rainstorms were coming along and the air was very rough. We steered for the coast of Italy and flew up and down trying to locate a position at which we might attempt a landing. The "P.D." was often turned nearly upside down in the rainstorm. We made for a bay and intended to land on a beach, but after circling over it at 20 feet above we found it to be much too rough, so we rose again and flew inland and after a while of looking round we found a spot and alighted on it. We learned afterwards that we had hit on the only spot within twenty miles suitable for landing. The field was somewhat rough, and was 8 miles from the town of Nicastra. When plotting out our position we found that we were further away from Brindisi than when we started from Naples, and this after the most glorious but most terrifying flight for three hours that we had ever made. We had to get a further supply of petrol from Naples, and while considering what should be our next move we were approached by an Italian gentleman who seemed pleased to see us, spoke English and turned out to be the Baron Giovanni Nicotera, who is a big landowner in the Nicastra district. He very kindly offered to put our little "P.D." and ourselves up at his property near by and we hauled her along with



NICA-TRA, FROM 300 FEET.



ATHENS, FROM 1,000 FEET.

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the aid of some bullocks to the suggested haven. The Baron entertained us right royally. Parer and I tossed up that evening to decide who should go to Naples for the petrol. Parer lost the toss and went.

The people here were a better class than the people we met at Sarzana; their houses however were awful. They lived like pigs. There were but a couple of well-to-do persons in the community and there was the first-hand proof of the accumulation of wealth and the decay of men. The population of Nicastra and surrounding hamlets is about 7,000. The town is surrounded by hills. There is an old German castle near by and leading to it is a magnificent road which has stood the test of ages. It winds gradually up the hills and is lost miles and miles away further on. The castle is one of the most wonderful we have seen. We did not stay at the house of the Baron as we did not feel that our covering was good enough. We took a room at the ~~the~~ Albergo Unione at Nicastra and were well looked after. Frost-bitten faces had to be cured and after a day or two this was done. The petrol arrived on the 9th after the greatest trouble. The railway people made all sorts of objections to carrying it, and when it arrived at the St. Euphemia Station, 10 miles from Nicastra, the authorities did not want to let us take it away. However, when we went along armed to the teeth in grease-covered clothes, they thought better of it and we went off satisfied. Every one of the days lost at Nicastra was a good flying day. It always seems to be that way

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when for some reason or another we are unable to fly. We were now a month away from Hounslow and the greater part of that time was spent either waiting for money or waiting for petrol. When we opened the barrel we found that the spirit was the colour of wine. After rolling it two miles we thought that we were indeed unfortunate, until we tested it. It was alright. A scourge of influenza had visited Nicastra and many deaths occurred every day. There were no helpers to roll our barrel and we had perforce to do it ourselves. On the 10th we left Nicastra at 9 A.M. We had a bad take-off owing to the roughness of the ground and a rather bad cross-wind, which we could not escape. At the request of the Baron we flew round the town and then, ever gathering height, we set off on our second attempt for Brindisi, at 5,000 feet. It was a bad flying day, but in comparison with others we had survived, it was good. We crossed the Gulf of Taranto and struck the coast at Taranto. The petrol was bad so we decided to land and made a good landing. We were met by Commandant Bruno Brivonesi, who told us that his wind report for that day was one of the worst he had for some time. He was in charge of the Grottaglia Station, and both the Commandant and his wife, who is an English lady, treated us very well. As we landed at noon our flying time was but 2 hours and 20 minutes. Next day we overhauled the aeroplane, put her into tip-top condition and filled up the tanks with good spirit. Our stay at Nicastra had its effect on our internal

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arrangements and we both suffered from a painful sort of colic. During the day we visited the town of Taranto and took a few photographs. It is an uninteresting port. Our total flying time from London to Taranto was 20 hours and 20 minutes.

On the 12th we left Taranto, at 10-45 A.M., and flew S.E., to Otranto Point, when we noticed our rear petrol pump out of action. We went on to the St. Vito aerodrome, Brindisi, and landed at 12-30. We were in the air for 1 hour and 45 minutes. This aerodrome is about 8 miles from Brindisi and is a very good one. There were eleven hangars empty. We tied down in the best of them. These were the first hangars in which we had seen the floors made of sharp road metal set in cement. Such a floor would play havoc with the rubber covers of pneumatic wheels which had to bear the weight of an aeroplane, and of the lot at the St. Vito aerodrome there was but one with a floor upon which any aviator would dare to rest his machine. When we arrived here we found Major Brackley and his Handley Page. The machine was tied down outside in the open and had been there for some days. When someone connected with the Handley Page machine saw that we had found a hangar with a suitable floor, our little "P.D." was pushed out to allow the Handley Page monster to get its tail under cover. We of course being very poor could not afford either to leave our machine out in the open or to put it on to rough floor. We had naturally sought the best

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and it did not take long to go through all the hangars. It occurred to us that there might be one which was suitable. We found it, and after getting the best by right of discovery, we were walked over by the opulent. It was ever thus on our trip up to this time, but after all the rebuffs, we seemed to be making good while we saw the others, who perhaps were not so kind to us as they might have been, being left behind in the game of flying. The natural law of compensation was irrevocably at work, and that there is some such law we could readily demonstrate. We made it a point never to bewail or bemoan, and though we hoped ever to chant the beauty of the good, we have found it jolly hard not to bark against the thoughtless. The frigidities at the hands of the strong which we have up to now suffered and borne without a word, have left a mark, have raised a spleen of which we did not think we were capable; but anyhow it's no good trying to work it off on this excellent occasion as our Editor is in the way, and we may not set down anything which will not help somebody. After losing our house we were able to hire a tarpaulin and with this we covered our faithful little machine. We had the Handley Page with us for the few hours we were at St. Vito, as the pilot was awaiting a new propeller to replace the one on the machine which had been broken in the killing of the mechanic, who stood too near when giving it a swing preparatory to starting. There were no spares in such an out-of-the-way place, and of course people would not think or

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foresee such an accident and provide for it. It was a lesson to us, and we were glad indeed that we had a spare propeller tucked away under our fuselage. Any sort of an accident might put a propeller out of action. We put up at the Hotel de l'Europe, a very second-rate sort of place, but the best at Brindisi, so far as we know.

On the 13th we started from St. Vito at 11-45 A.M. and steered S.E. We passed over Corfu at 1-30 and at that time we had a duty to perform : we call it a duty because we are simple men; may be it was also a mark of respect to register—in the only way at our command—our great regard for Captains Howell and Fraser, those brave men who lost their lives in the Martynside just below us. And now Editor or no Editor, we are going to break away from his commands and we are going to curse someone. This is why. At St. Vito we met a man who did some of the observing at Corfu. He was in view of the accident to the Martynside but too far away (2 miles) to render any assistance until too late. The aeroplane had “gone bung” and the pilot was making a bee-line for the shore. He lifted a little, evidently saw that a landing would mean a crash and possibly the death of himself and the mechanic, and then went straight at the sea on a calculation to strike it right up close to the land. On he went, ever lower and lower, until the crash came within about a hundred yards of the land and within about that distance of a fast motor-boat, which evidently Howell had seen. Down they dropped with a splash, and the observer who had rushed



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for his very life over the rough places to reach the site of the splash, heard the men screaming for help. Too late he arrived at a suitable get-off to help. He found some men alongside the motor-boat and asked whether they had heard the screams. They replied that they had but that they did not dare risk the motor-boat as there was sea on which it might not stand. The observer could do nothing as it was evident that the occupants of the aeroplane were dead. All was silent and there was no sign of life on the somewhat rough surface of the water. The onlookers—the almost murderers of Howell and Fraser—were spoken to roughly by the observer and something happened which caused police action to be set up against the observer for assault of some sort of an official. Pity, as the observer got away safely, that the charge from which he bolted was not murder. Right there we dropped our little tribute of Brindisi flowers, which we had stowed away in the cockpit, and a hundred yards further on we dropped 500 pamphlets in the language which the cowardly dogs who sat by and heard those screams could understand better than we, that we, the next to fly over the scene by design, might register our detestation of the act of which they had been guilty. We did not stop at that, for we had still another 500 pamphlets and these were no Legion d'Honneur for the corps to which the miscreants belonged. We trod on the pride of Corfu as thoroughly as it was possible for us to do. We felt better after our little trip over Corfu, and it is needless to say that

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the magnetism flowed heavy from Corfu right deep into our hearts as we set off that morning to carry out the only little act which we felt would put us right and express airmen's feelings of a dirty act towards some of their kind. Corfu knows who we were for there was nothing anonymous about our message. We continued our flight over water all the way to Athens, where we landed at 4-45 P.M., at the Goody aerodrome.

This aerodrome is fair, some sand and hard soil. The Greeks had a few French aeroplanes at the aerodrome and appeared to be very keen aviators. There are no proper arrangements at this landing-place and no establishment for repairs. As the flight of 5 hours from Brindisi to Athens was the longest we had made since leaving Hounslow, we wanted to have a good clean up and get ready for the very serious flight in front of us. It was a cold afternoon and after a look round the camp we proceeded to Athens and took rooms at the Grand Hotel Majestic.

Next day we rested, and met Mr. and Mrs. Shorter, the former representing the Aircraft Co., Ltd., the builders of our "P.D." He was delighted to see us and had had no information regarding our flight. We were just birds from the blue. He was at Athens trying to sell some of his machines to the Greek Government, so our arrival was a fillip of Province, which was by no means regretted by him. We soon arranged with Mr. Shorter that we would help him in every possible way to get some machines off and, if necessary, we would

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give a demonstration. Our 5 hours' flight of the day before should have been sufficient incentive to the Aviation Board to place orders. Next day we went to the aerodrome early, and as all the Greeks were there we flew for a while. The weather was good, and Athens looked a beautiful place from the air. The Acropolis was the most prominent landmark and we took several air photos of it. All the principal buildings were picked out, and from our collection we have chosen some of interest for publication.

We flew over Athens at a low height and in approaching the aerodrome we ran into some sportsman's kite. It was quite a large affair and once tangled in our rigging it refused to be released. We made a good landing on our return, and rested for the remainder of the day. On the 16th the weather was very bad and we decided not to leave. The flight from Athens to Suda Bay is not a nice one at any time, and we did not propose to take any unnecessary risks. The next day was similar and we spent it in looking over all the great old Grecian monuments.

## CHAPTER V.

ON the 18th the weather had cleared and we left Athens for Suda Bay, Island of Crete, at 10-30 A.M. There was a somewhat strong wind blowing which increased in force as we got clear of Greece. We soon struck some low-lying clouds at about 40 miles out to sea. It was quite impossible to get through them, and worse was to befall us, as the weather took a decided change and heavy, squally conditions set in which reached right down to the sea. We saw that a steamer steering in the same direction as ourselves was having a very bad time, and after about the hardest buffeting about which we had had since we left England—and we did not forget any of our experiences—we decided to turn back and await better weather at Athens. We rose on the turn to about 8,000 feet, where we struck good flying conditions. We had wasted a good deal of time but we decided to make another attempt to get to Suda Bay at the higher elevation we had reached above the clouds. Our position being fixed, we steered a compass course. When we were at about some point on the west coast of Crete a little portion of the island was seen through a break in the clouds—which we fortunately saw. We dropped 3,000 feet and steered along the coast to Suda Bay.

We made three circuits of the aerodrome at ever decreasing height, as we were told that it was “a terrible

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place to land at," and at 2 P.M., we were in landing position. We made a good landing, but the heavy rain of the past few days and that of the present day had made the surface so soft that we were promptly bogged. We went and saw the place where the Blackburn Kangaroo was bogged, and we also went to the place where this machine crashed some time later. We were well received, and met Lieutenant Potts, of the A.F.C., who was one of the Blackburn Kangaroo's crew and who was staying at Suda Bay waiting for instructions as to what to do with the machine. We stayed with Potts at the so-called officers' mess, an unglorified barn fixed for three persons, that night. Next day we carried out a few repairs to the "P.D.," and looked round the desolate hole called Suda Bay. There are about half a dozen English people at Candia, the only town. As we were getting an extraordinary vibration in the fuselage of our machine about every five minutes since we completed our flight from Brindisi, we decided to give the machine a good looking-over. The vibration suggested that there was a weakness in the tail and that it would fall off. Our full examination however did not disclose the cause of this extraordinary vibration.

On the 20th February we left Suda Bay at 10 A.M., and rose to 6,000 feet in order to cross the snow-clad mountains of the centre portion of the island. It took us half an hour to clear this area of danger and beauty. Here was the birthplace of the MISTRAL, the dread

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wind which has accounted for so many stout ships on the coast of Crete, and as a sort of show of power the Gods saw fit to start one up, apparently for our benefit, as there were no ships in sight when we crossed the south coast of the island clear of clouds. The cold wind began to roar through our rigging, clouds hove in sight and we mounted above them and flew, still feeling the effect of the rush of wind below.

Occasionally the clouds opened to show us the spume which covered the surface of the Mediterranean, the sea which we had been told would be covered at small intervals with shipping, which through all our long flight we never saw. When within about 50 miles of the African coast we had trouble with our petrol feed and carburettor. We gradually sank and sank, until we were wondering whether we would be able to pick up again and save ourselves from the certain watery grave should we not do so. We had a couple of tubes pumped up as life-belts in case of such an accident. That which happened to poor Howell and Fraser swarmed into both our minds. We did all we could to get things right again, and when about 50 feet from the water, and with certainly not more than a mile to go before landing in it, the engine began to beat again, and we worked her up to good strength before attempting to rise from our perilous proximity to the waves.

Our little, puny life actions passed through our minds in those tense few minutes, and the sense of relief when we began to rise again was almost overwhelming.

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Without further incident we arrived over the African coast, about 60 miles west of Sollum. The coast-line seemed to hold sheds on its surface, but on closer observation we found them to be the angriest-looking of rocks. We followed along the coast until we came to Marsa Matruk. There is a temporary aerodrome here, which is as hard as a billiard-table, but which is sometimes under water, and we landed there at 3 P.M., after the most thrilling flight of our lives. Even more thrilling than our experience over Vesuvius, when our lives might have been consumed by the other element. We left this desolate place at 11 A.M., on the 21st, and flew along the coast hills, past Bousheifa to Alexandria, of which a very good sight was got, as well as of the delta of the Nile, and thence along the Nile,—Salamia, a short way off—until we sighted the Pyramids. We dropped and flew round them a couple of times in order to get photographs. We then crossed over the Nile to Cairo and passed the city at a height of 1,000 feet. At 2 P.M. we landed at the aerodrome at Heliopolis. There were two aerodromes and we landed at the wrong one. We then went on to the other one, and when we had landed near the "Silver Queen," belonging to the Handley Page Co., we found that we were still at the wrong 'drome. This second aerodrome was better than the first. Here we heard that we were to go to Helouan aerodrome, and after lunching we flew there. We saw Brackley and the H.P. we left at Brindisi. On arriving near Helouan we saw

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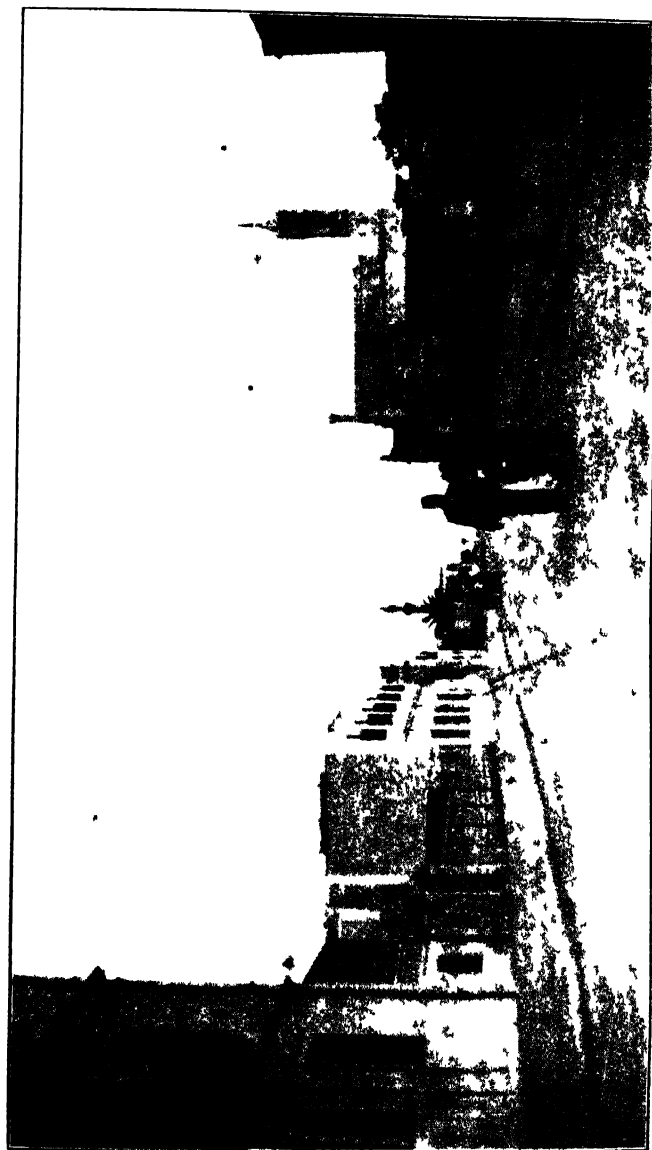
that a great crowd had congregated and we thought that we were important personages indeed. There were lots of smoke-bombs bursting to show us the landing-place and to signal the wind position. On landing we found that we were not the persons the crowd was so anxiously awaiting, but that no lesser personage than Lord Milner was expected. We crawled into ourselves when it was driven home to us that we were such small fish and that the same old cold shoulder, upon which we had been fed for so many flying hours, was still our portion. All hands however were good to us, and we had the pleasure of meeting Lord Milner when he did arrive, and the first really appreciated words from an Englishman since we left Home came from the lips of that great man. We discovered that we had a broken exhaust spring, owing to shocks, etc., and we set about having it repaired. The engine was in good condition and required nothing more than a clean-up, which we gave it.

On the 22nd we went to Cairo, to Shepherd's Hotel, where we celebrated the Parer birthday. On the 23rd we visited the Staff Headquarters of the Royal Air Force, on the invitation of the O.C., and were provided with maps of the route to Karachi. We had lost all our maps in the storm we passed through on the flight to Taranto. We improved the shining hour by having some clothes made, getting our films developed and having a general look round prior to again setting out on our voyage. On the 24th we had a quiet day and celebrated

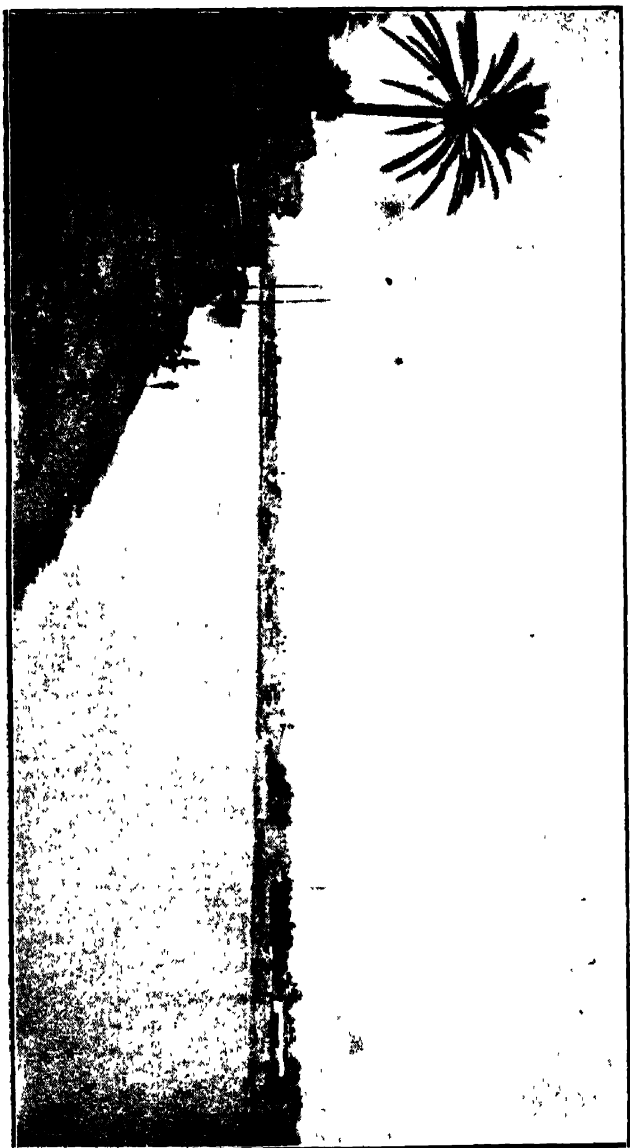


## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

the McIntosh birthday. On the 25th we had the trial flight and found that the right wing was low. We set this right and prepared everything for the start next day.



•  
HIT CAN THE APODROMY TOWN



BACDAD.

## CHAPTER VI.

ON the 26th we left Helouan at 11 A.M., were soon over the Suez Canal and shortly at Gaza. Here we ran into a rainstorm and after a battle we pulled up at Ramleh at 2-30. The aerodrome at this place is right on a hill, sloping and soft. We struck a good landing or should have gone on into a nullah and a bog. Others had done it before us. As we had determined to cross the desert straight to Bagdad, instead of going round the expensive well-beaten track, we had our compasses tested. The officers at Ramleh were most attentive and were greatly interested in our lone flight across the desert, which—without mincing matters—they told us was impossible. Paupers cannot choose and we were paupers. The best comes out of a man when he is not suffering from affluence. Doubtless we could have arranged for our keep and supplies right round the other route, but we were not out for making obligations to anyone. On the 27th we left the Ramleh aerodrome at 9 A.M., for Bagdad, steering a compass course. We passed over the hills east of Ramleh at an altitude of 5,000 feet. We crossed the Jordan a little north of the Dead Sea and took photos of both places. Looking back, so clear is the air of the desert, we could see Ramleh and the Mediterranean after we had left the latter place 11½ hours. When passing over the northern

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end of the Dead Sea we had away in front of us a formation of mountains. We had taken a snapshot or two of Jerusalem en passant and considered that our photographic treasures were sufficient for the day. Soon we had a very dry head-wind to battle against. There were patches of snow on the hill-tops. We passed over a second range of table-topped hills and Arab settlements thereon, and occasionally we passed caravans on routes which were more or less marked by white patches. As shown on the chart we prepared of the desert, we passed an area of what appeared to be black lava, which shone bright from an altitude of 4,000 feet. After this we came in view of what seemed to be interminable brown desert as far as the eye could reach on all sides. We went down to 300 to 400 feet for a while, and when 20 miles away, out in the arid desert, we espied a man coming along on horseback from goodness knows where, for there was not a sign of any sort of habitation as far as we could see. We saw many black animals sprinting across the desert. They looked something like large dogs, but there was no other life so far as we know. Over this waste we flew for  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours and in that time we covered over 350 miles. Up to now all was well with us, but the carburettor began to give trouble and though we did our best to set it right in the air, we were forced to descend, and landed safely. We started again after about an hour. The desert here was undulating and a little bumpy, but we took off right • enough. An hour later it got suddenly dark and we

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decided to land near a lake, which we decided was Lake Habaniyeh. As there was another lake to the south which was not marked on the map, we were not sure as to where we were. It was raining heavily, and though there seemed to be an Arab settlement not far away, we slept in the machine, fixing up a cover out of our flying clothes which shielded us from the rain. Early next morning we were disturbed by an Arab calling to us or to someone.

In a very short space of time a crowd of Arabs appeared about the aeroplane and we were rather afraid as to what their gesticulations meant. In order that we might impress them favourably and at the same time let them see that we did not intend to be trifled with, our revolvers were brought into operation. We shot here and there, and in the end an old man called a lot of the younger bloods together and after some harangue, which we of course could not understand, they all put down their guns. There were all sorts of guns. They walked towards us with their hands half up. The old man signed to us that we could not go on. There was no doubt about the significance of the signs, and then he took our Thermos flask, which we had laid on the ground after having our morning drink, and carried it away from the machine a full thirty paces, which he measured with some dramatic show. Then he returned and signed to us that we or one of us was to shoot at it. We were both good shots, but the Scot was perhaps the better shot of the firm and he had to do the shooting. He sent three

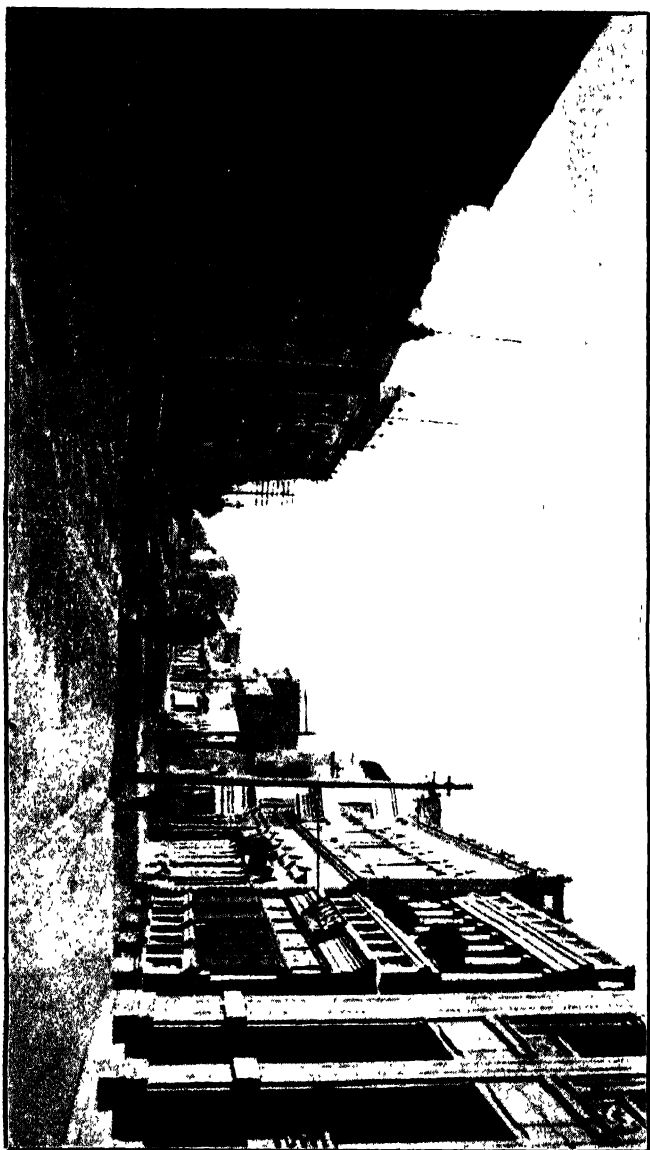
## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

shots plumb through the bottom of our poor old Thermos. The Arabs howled with delight and went on their shins and clapped. The old man came up, patted us both on the shoulders and pointed to the machine. We took it that we might go on and we lost no time in getting into the air. Crowds came from the settlement and howled themselves hoarse, we should think, as they followed us gradually fading away towards Bagdad. Rain commenced to fall when we parted with our truculent acquaintances and it continued to do so until we struck the Euphrates. We hit the aerodrome without difficulty when we were over Bagdad and landed on at 11 A.M. on the 28th. We should have been able to go right through on the 27th had it not been that we made a late start from Ramleh. Bagdad was our eighteenth stop on the route and four of them were forced. There was great surprise shown by the various people at the aerodrome, none of whom expected us. They had not been warned of our impending arrival and would not believe that we had come straight across the desert. They hardly believed us when we said that the reason we dropped straight down on the aerodrome was that we had not a drop of petrol to carry us a yard further. Such was the case, and we had been able to last as long as we did by using all our knowledge about the art of volplaning. We stayed at the aero mess. We saw all there was to see at Bagdad each afternoon, when we had finished the day's work on the aeroplane. On the 1st March we had the machine filled up and in the evening



PARER AT BAGDAD.





A KARACHI STREET.

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

dined with two of the R.A.F. officers at the best hotel in Bagdad: The Maude Hotel, named after the great general who put the stopper on Johnny Turk and his Arab dupes. What a hotel! The British ought to see that the profiteer who runs it be made to pull it down and build something befitting such an illustrious name as it has the audacity to blurt out on its sign.

## CHAPTER VII.

AT 2-30 on the 2nd March we left Bagdad for Busra, following the Tigris and cutting corners off it now and again in order to shorten the distance to the Shatt-el-Arab. We landed at Busra at 5-30, just as it was getting dark. We had been armed with local maps at Bagdad and were able to go over Ctesiphon, where General Townshend met some trouble. We could see some sort of an arch there but it did not look suitable enough for a photo. Then lower down we saw Lajj, where the cavalry got a cutting-up during the time of General Maude. Then lower down we went over Baghaila, and from there to the great bends of the river which marked the crossing when it was too late to save Townshend at Kut-el-Amara. This town looks a dirty, cramped sort of a place. Its striking point is a tower with a mosque top, and then in a flash we were over a large shrine in between a maze of streams, depressions and secondary waterways.

The river seemed to be held in by artificial bunds. Here we crossed to the river after it wound through a perfect maze of turns, and drove over a dismal-looking place called Ali-el-Gharbi. We thought of the poor devils who might have been stationed in such a place during the War and of those buried there. To our left front there were high mountains, known as the

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

Pusht-i-Kuh, which shelter an old turncoat known as the Wali of Pusht-i-Kuh, and his heir, Amanullah Khan, the lad who was responsible for the cutting up of some Russian Cossacks who had made a remarkable ride through the mountains bearing a despatch from Baratoff to Maude. At the foot of these mountains lay Bedrah, a nice-looking little town at a great distance. \* From Ali-el-Gharbi we proceeded down the great river, which is the main artery of a very well-populated district, to rather a large town, set right in the middle of what seemed to us to be a flooded desert, named Amara. The mountains lay back from the river a distance of about 40 miles, and the ground between looks like splendid country for agricultural pursuits as it is well served with big canals, upon which we could see the peculiar boats of the country at work. From here, where the river is wider than elsewhere, it suddenly takes on a tortuous course, continuous S's and hairpin bends until we are over Ezra's Tomb. The railway follows the right bank. Ezra's Tomb is supposed to be in the Garden of Eden. As there is not a tree to be seen and only a few crooked palms, we did not think much of the garden frequented by the first two. It was about the most desolate-looking spot along the river. Further down there were other small stations, and then we arrived over the junction of the Euphrates, or Frat, with the Tigris. From near where was fought the Battle of Shaiba the two rivers are known as the Shatt-el-Arab, and a fine broad stream

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

it is. We were at Busra in no time, and when we landed we were taken over by some R.A.F. officers. The personnel of the aerodrome was 49 pariah dogs (pariah means mongrel) by day, 7 R.A.F. officers, 3 men, 1 old B.E. aeroplane, 42 pairs of ammunition boots, 120 periscopes, for trench use, and an aerodrome which is impossible in wet weather and bad in dry weather. There is no medium. At night, the personnel is added to by the arrival of about 4,000 jackals and lessened by the disappearance of about 5 pariahs, whose strength is made up next day from Busra. The engine was not running too well. We attended to it on the 3rd, and looked over the town. The shops charged enormous prices for everything and such profiteering we had never heard of over the whole course of our flight. We had paid an enormous price for oil once, but we were absolutely precluded from buying so much as a cigarette at Busra.

We went to an English tailoring firm for something clean, but when the Scot member of our firm asked the price, we walked out, preferring to keep the few bawbees we had in our pockets. As a matter of fact we had not enough to buy a field service cap apiece, and we had thought there was ample to buy a suit of clothes each as well. The name of the firm we will not divulge, but we felt that if we really wanted things we should have had all the blood sucked out of us in no time if we fell into the web woven for us by our R.A.F. friends of Busra who took us along.

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

We went to the picture house at Ashar, the town across the way and skirting the Ashar Creek. What a creek! Britishers used to be shot there in the old days by men who hid behind the palms on the other side. We passed along, in the most execrable gharry we have ever entered, after having been bled almost seriously by the bellum, or native boatman, who pulled us across the river. The cinema was built by a Russian and an Armenian some years ago. The show was poor. We went to other places, saw some dancing-girls at work, and we considered they earned their pay.

The Arab population is an interesting one. All kinds of peculiar head-dresses are seen, and all the women of account move about veiled. They also wear very fine silk stockings and embroidered sandals. We never saw their faces, but from what we saw of their feet we would not like them. The men were, taken all round, a stalwart lot of scoundrels. Not worth fighting for, in our humble opinion. Here and there were rough Persians, and we knew enough of them to know that they are no good to anyone. We were glad when we were through with Busra, and we had made up our minds to leave next morning.

A word or two about the Arab might be usefully introduced here, so far as we can enter. One of the firm has studied them, and as we jointly went through their wide country over a route never before travelled, so far as we know, by a white man, perhaps we may give our impressions and statement. Syria is nothing to

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what it once was, before the War. The leading Arab stalwarts have gone either to their deaths at the hand of Johnny Turk or to Asia Minor, deported, or to Egypt to live under British rule. In the Dardanelles many of them left their bones and the smart ones mutinied and were sent back to Iraq, where they were able to desert the service of their oppressors. Syria, and especially its towns from Jerusalem up to Aleppo, held the bosses of the pan-Arab organisations, and these had to be got rid of in the interests of Germany and Turkey, principally in the interests of the former. The Arabs of this district were better educated than those of Iraq and come more in contact with the civilisation of the West. America and most European countries were interested in the Arabs of these parts and made friends of many of them through the tourists they sent abroad. Religion broke up the Arab nation because there were many sects, there was no co-operation, no centralisation of purpose, and the Germans or their tools fell upon the split forces and tore them to pieces. The Arab Jew held that a certain large tract of the country was rightfully his, and he is to get it. He is no fighter and would sooner cringe than stand up. Never fired a shot for Turk or against Turk. The Bedouin of the desert over which we passed, or rather of the skirt of it, are fine fellows, fighters and brave men, but all the other Arabs are a lot of cringing wailers, who cry before they are hurt and who are prepared to help either side in a fight if money be forthcoming.

## Record Flight from London to Calcutta

In Iraq there are two sections, the Sunni and the Shiah. They used to fight one another, they do not do so now. Too tired! The Arabs in this part of Arabian territory populate the great alluvial areas of the Tigris and Euphrates. They do not cultivate any more of it than is necessary. Too lazy! In the old days they used to raid one another, not now. Too cowardly! Too afraid of their skins. All the Arabs of these alluvial areas originally came from the great deserts, but they have lost all their desert instinct and all the good traits of the desert Arabs. The marsh Arabs are more like the old stock and they are raiders and fighters. The old Arab who loved his horse has gone out. See the way they treat the friend of man now-a-days! The Persians are Shiah and have their shrines at Kerbela and Nejef. These shrines are more money-making spots than anything else to-day, though bodies *are* carried now and again that way. If the shrines are *holy*, there was some sacrilege during the War.

While the Bedouins of Arabia are Sunni to a man, the Arabs of Iraq are almost all Shiah. They have turned over to the other side of Islam, the side from which they made most money—Persia. Round about Busra are the Muntifik, who occupy the district between the two rivers and a little beyond. They or their forefathers came from Mecca and are Sunni of the tribe Sadun. This tribe is rapidly losing its authority, if indeed it has not already entirely lost it. Those who are left are first-class intriguers, and they have probably



## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

taken money from both sides during the late war in Mesopotamia. The elders have a happy knack of getting the authorities to believe them and to believe in their loyalty to Britain.

The Abu Mohammed is another large section, but not so good as the Muntifik. The Bani Rabiah are the best of this section. They are murderous, double-dealing people, much superior to the quiet, cultivating Bani Lam of the same section lower down the Tigris, towards and around Amara. There are no other big sections, and right through from Syria we find the remnants of sections which were once great.

The Arab nation was suffering a retrograde movement long before the Turk stepped in with the war-knife. At Busra we heard all sorts of yarns about the Arab and his thefts of petty articles, and we told truths of his thefts of much more important goods and of the knife they freely used in the days of the war to get off with the goods if discovered in the act. We saw the domineering manner of the Arab at Busra, same as we saw it at Bagdad, and we fear for the future. Britain is on the right line when she declares that the R.A.F. is to hold Mesopotamia. The R.A.F. will do so right enough if they are supplied with plenty of nice, light, nasty, stingy bombs.

We left Busra, at 10-20 P.M., on the 4th of March and flew down the Shatt-el-Arab to the Persian Gulf, past the Oil Works of the Anglo-Persian Oil Co., that great Imperial Company which operates the oil-fields discovered

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

by D'Arcy, one of the Australian prospectors. If the story be true, he struck oil with his last shilling after the district had been prospected for miles without success. The A.P. is one of the most wonderful companies in the world now, and its oil resources are bigger than those of America. American wells will be dry when those of the A.P. are in full swing. We saw the pipe-line running into Abadan which cost Great Britain hundreds of millions of pounds sterling to keep intact and a British possession. We passed Moham-merah at the mouth of a river leading up towards the oil-fields before we reached Abadan. Passing over the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab we could see the bar which blocked the entry to the river and which seems to be in course of removal. Thick-looking ships were about there—they may have been dredgers. There was much activity on the river and outside in the gulf. Both sides of the Shatt-el-Arab showed us great flooded areas, so much so that the river seemed to be miles wide. The floods were much heavier than those passed between Bagdad and Busra, and in some parts of that district they were fifty miles across.

We flew over the head of the Gulf and landed at Bushire at 1.10 P.M. The Bushire aerodrome is far ahead of Busra. Our aeroplane was a little strained, as we had been carrying very heavy loads, and the rain had damaged our propeller, so we decided to look her over and fit on the new propeller. We left Bushire, at 8 A.M., on the 5th of March, and passed over very rugged

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

country most of the time until we were over Bandar Abbas, where we landed at 2-20 P.M. The engine had been running very well right through from Busra. We were well received but found that the sun heat was terrific. The British Consul was very kind to us and with him we stayed that night. The natives were much interested and turned out in great numbers to see us. Mathews is at a place called Jask, where he suffered his crash after a partial crash some miles back. On the 6th we set off at 7-20 A.M., and rising to 4,000 feet we proceeded well to Chabbar, where we landed at 12-15. We were again well received, and we had now established a record : the first single-engined aeroplane to reach Chabbar from England. Mathews, who started three months before us, being the only other single-engine driver on the route, and he took another course. The few houses at Chabbar are still bound by barbed wire entanglements owing to the natives of the district being of the raiding type. We dined with the O.C. of a Brahmin Company. There was a great festival on, and besides being garlanded we had to eat all sorts of nuts and things we did not like. We carried the mail from here to Karachi. We left Chabbar at 8-30 A.M., on Sunday the 7th, the first Sunday that we had flown since we left England. We ran into a new experience, a sandstorm. The sand was up to 5,000 feet, so we ran out to sea to avoid it. The formation of the coast rocks along our flight was most extraordinary and must be seen from the air to be appreciated.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WE landed at Karachi at 1-20 after a rough flight. The aerodrome is situated outside Karachi, about 8 miles or so.

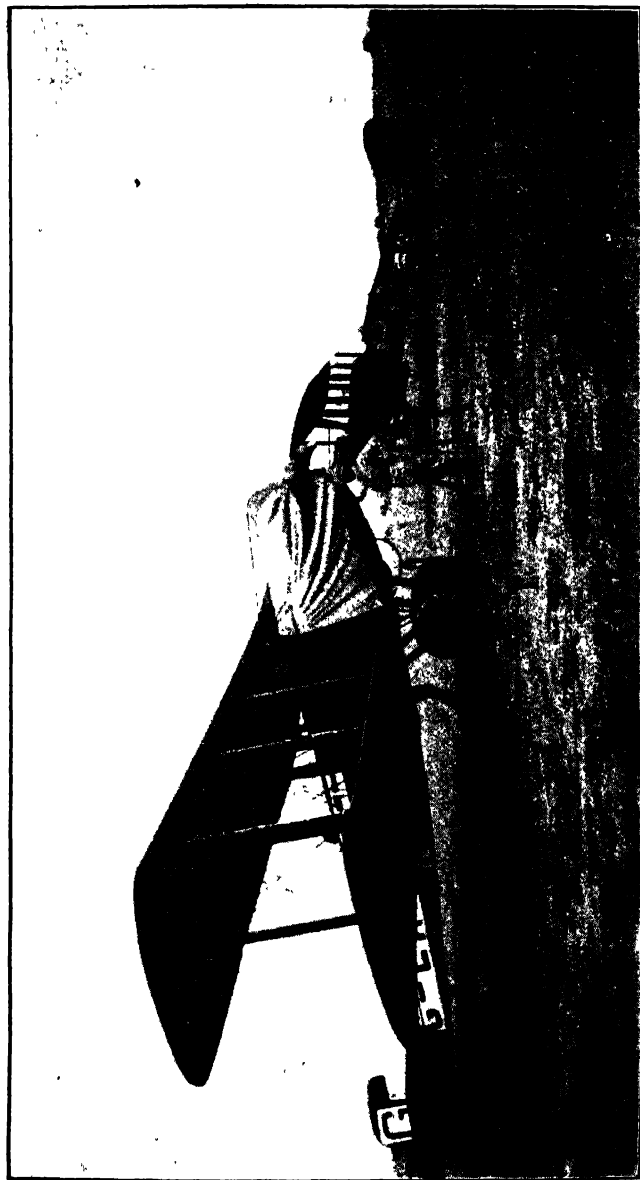
The first to greet us on landing was Mathews. It was good to see him and we had a great exchange of experiences. From the day of arrival to the evening of the 10th March we were busy on our "P.D.," and when the day's work each day was over we amused ourselves taking photos of the sights of the district. We decided to leave on the morning of the 11th for Calcutta, *via* Nasirabad, Delhi and Allahabad. Mathews and ourselves were to leave in company. We were up at the aerodrome early and Mathews took off at 7 A.M. We followed at 8-10 A.M., after fixing up a petrol leak which we discovered after Mathews had started. We had had about enough of the flight when at 3-10 we landed at Nasirabad after 7 hours in the air. We took some good photographs of Hyderabad on the Indus and of other places and so increased our stock of photos from the air. All the people of Nasirabad, an old, dull, military station, turned out to see us as we landed on the disused golf-links.

Next morning we left Nasirabad at 7 o'clock and passed over much cultivated country on the road to Delhi, the capital of India. We set a course on an

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

almost straight compass line, leaving Jaipur to our right. We went right over Delhi at a height of 4,000 feet, and in order to show the people there that our little machine was air-worthy, we gave them a stunt or two, including a side-roll over and over for a thousand feet or so. We could not find the aerodrome for some time but finally espied it and landed at 10-15 A.M. We filled up with 60 gallons of petrol and 10 of oil, and were ready to go on the same afternoon. Mathews was here and he said that he would have to stay some days to effect certain repairs.

An incident occurred here, for we ran off in the excitement of next morning's departure without paying or signing for the spirit and oil. We thought that the R.A.F. people would attend to that as we were guaranteed right through with the Air Ministry in London, and provided that the Air Ministry's depôts were able to supply, it was understood that they were to do so. We were somewhat shocked to hear in Calcutta that we had run away "without paying for our fuel." We could not have paid anyhow, and all the persons concerned at Delhi knew that perfectly well, for we made no bones about our financial position. However, if some of those parties cast their minds back, perhaps they will remember that we ate nothing during our stay in Delhi, and it was for that reason that we were anxious to get off on the afternoon we arrived there, so that we might shelter in Allahabad and incidentally crack a record. We left Delhi at 7 A.M. on the 13th, rose to 3,000 feet and



MATHEWS, HIS SOPWITH, AND THE "P. D." AT DELHI.



**JUMNA, BETWEEN DELHI AND ALLAHABAD.**

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

followed the railway for a while. We passed Agra and all the interesting towns along the holy Jumna River, leaving Lucknow and Cawnpore (the Indian city where they make all sorts of woollen goods) in sight on our port bow, and so on to Allahabad, where we landed, on a very bad aerodrome, at 11-30 A.M. There is a powerful wireless station near by and a fort such as one sees in most big Indian cities. There was no one to give us a smoke signal and owing to the wind difficulty which we experienced in landing, the last part of this section of our voyage was not at all pleasant. On landing we experienced a difficulty in getting our wants attended to. Up to now we had found that flying between the hours of 10 A.M. and 3 P.M. was not good in India. The early morning and evening conditions are better.

On Sunday, the 14th, we again took the wing, for Calcutta, from Allahabad at 7 A.M. We left an hour after a thunderstorm had shown itself in the district. Such an experience as we had from Allahabad to Calcutta we could never stand a second time. All was well until we passed over Benares, where we descended in order to get a photo of a great procession and congregation of people. Shortly after we ran into rain and the blackest clouds we had ever seen in our lives. The bank which faced us in Italy in our tender days was a baby to it. Before we knew where we were we had run into an outlier, and when we touched it we were drenched through and through. How Nature could hold so much water in suspension, beat us. We were almost



## Record Flight from London to Calcutta

submerged or we might have been except for the fact that we were speeding through at nearly two miles a minute. Our air speed was about the same as our ground speed. We ran off out of the water and then the guns of Heaven began to boom, and the lightning seemed to threaten our entry into its domains all round us at the same moment. Our staunch "P.D." held on, first tipping to this side and then to the other. Such acrobatic performances we knew could not go on for long. On one occasion we were tilted right over and held on to our seats only with the greatest difficulty. Again a gust caught us much stronger than the others and we side-slipped almost out of control—a matter of 200 feet and then again another 300 feet. At one time we were almost on our backs. We had not yet got to the edge of the great black ball of thick air which sagged and was blown like a giant balloon this way and that engulfing us every now and again, even though at two miles per minute we were endeavouring to avoid it. So on we flew, bumped and buffeted, wet to the skin and bruised until we got out of the storm area. For a time we got along smoothly, but the wind veered round and we had either to follow suit, descend, and find a landing or go through to Calcutta. We decided on the latter course and butted right into the storm-sack. "P.D." was a live thing, full of elasticity, in this great solitary place, which after all was not solitary at all.

We were alone but there was no loneliness while we were clinging with all our might on to life. We were up

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

against a reality which discredited our heroes, and on we went through it with set purpose. After half an hour's buffeting, twisting, straining, wet to the skin and everything about the machine as taut as rigging, the nose of the "P.D." suddenly shot out into the clear air and we saw but fast, incisive lightning and heard the heavy rolls of thunder through the whirr of the propeller. We were out of the storm-bag and threatened by the lightning, which seemed almost to reach through to us. We were now at 6,000 feet, and we decided to drop a little.

Out of the storm, we perceived a long way in the east a fog and streaks of black smoke. We were in easy sight of Calcutta, and half an hour later we were at the end of a long volplane and swinging round over the aerodrome, which we picked up at once.

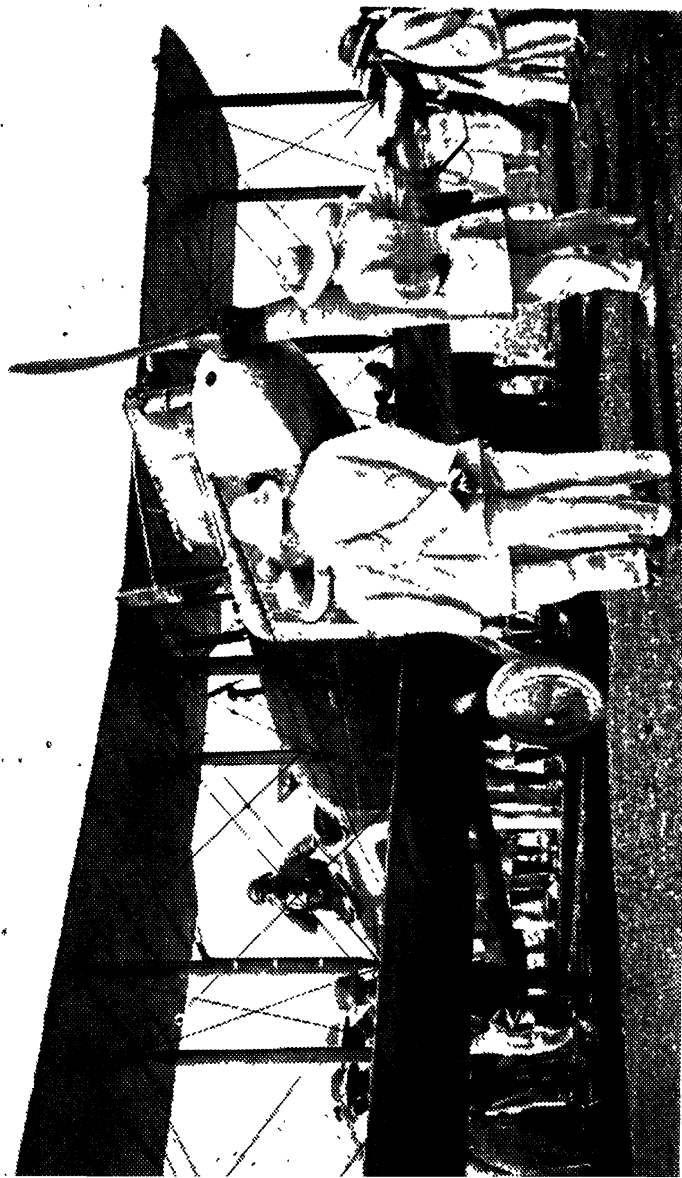
Our first impression of this aerodrome was that there were dangerous patches of trees but that otherwise it was perfect. We screwed down and in order to make certain of our landing we skimmed along, almost touching the surface, as is our wont with all new aerodromes, and then zoomed up to get position for the landing. We landed comfortably, and only after a walk over the ground did we see that there were one or two depressions which required to be filled in, over pipes if necessary, for Calcutta to have one of the best aerodromes in the world, at the Ellenborough Course. We have landed on some of the best aerodromes in the world and there is none in our opinion which could

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

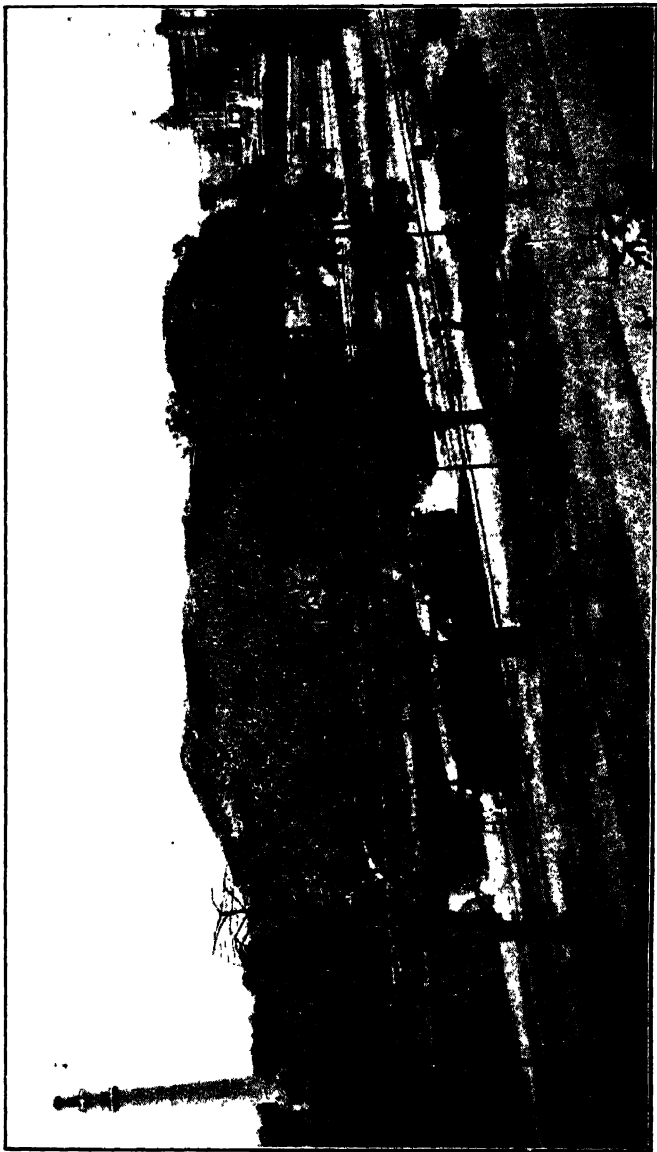
approach the Ellenborough if the necessary ground improvements were made. The trees skirting the ground are not in the way, and, in fact, are an aid to all machines except those very heavy uncommercial affairs which cannot collect flying speed under a run of quarter of a mile or more, in still air. The trees skirting the course are also a fine surrounding and excellent boundary marks. The few clumps in the course itself are not of much value in the city lungs, for they to a certain extent obstruct the free passage of the wind which carries off the effluvia or breaks it up.

After ten minutes in Calcutta we were told that Calcutta had no aerodrome and that it was a shame. We could not help protesting, and we could not help asking, What better is wanted than this ? We wanted to take a couple of axes and make an aerodrome of it that very evening, but we were told that the course was a "maidan" and that it was the property of very jealous people, the citizens of Calcutta. If they be jealous of their city, let them equip it with the best aerodrome in the world, and that aerodrome is the present landing-ground on the "Ellenborough Course."

We were splendidly received in Calcutta, and somehow or other the news had come before us that we were battling through this part of the world without any outside support. It was not long before we were offered whatever assistance we required, but before looking for work from strangers we had an ex-Staff Officer friend, who had served with us, to look up, and we set out to



THE "P.D." ARRIVES ON THE ELLENBOROUGH COURSE, CALCUTTA. 14TH MARCH, 1920.  
*Photo and black by "Statesman" Process Dept.*



A PART OF CALCUTTA.

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

find him. Calcutta extended the warm hand to us and we appreciated it at once and were grateful. We decided to wait for Mathews, who was still hung up at Delhi, and as we had established a record from Karachi which could not be beaten by the aeroplanes then on the route, we proposed to rest until Mathews joined us for the remainder of our long flight to "Down Under."

In due course we found the friend we were looking for, put our position plainly to him, and he promptly said that he would make arrangements for the cost of our flight to Melbourne. At last we were out of our difficulties and we produced the estimate of cost, which it was necessary for him to have. In a few days we found that our estimate was all wrong and that, indeed, the amount mentioned had been absorbed before arrangements for our onward safety as far as Batavia had been completed. It was necessary to raise more money, and it was necessary to work for it. "P.D." was turned into an advertising medium on our friends' advice, and the work was done. Even then there was insufficient, but arrangements had been completed as far as Dilli. Then came another proposal and we flew to Barrackpore and gave a little exhibition of what our game, staunch little machine could do. This was over the Barrackpore Race-course on the last day of the Spring Meeting. Our sponsor arranged the matter, and at the hands of Mr. Bayley and Mr. Hannay we were enabled to do something to fill the gap.

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

We looked well round Calcutta while awaiting Mathews, cleaning up the aeroplane and carrying out our advertisement work also. There were many minor adjustments and repairs necessary.

Most of these we were able to carry out and we were greatly helped by the employés of the Handley Page subsidiary company, which attended to the guarding and cleaning of the aeroplane.

Waiting and attending on the machine on Sunday the 18th was an expensive matter weighed in sovereigns, for it amounted to £14 at the prevailing rate of exchange. The Company, however, wrote that "Owing to the fact that you are now doing business in commercial aviation in this city, you will readily understand that we can only treat this matter from a business point of view." This was naturally quite justifiable as we had apparently made a notable business entry. Costs will be reduced as flying becomes more popular. Crowds of high-class Indians flocked to the aerodrome to see what one of them was pleased to call "Your wonderful little machine," and we had the pleasure of being asked by him to supply a similar one and run it for him on his jaunts to his zemindary. This was our first order on behalf of the business, and we feel sure that it is but the forerunner of many more from this zemindar and his friends, who have watched our progress from Karachi. We have of course something quite new in the aviation line for India and are hopeful that Aeroad Limited will enable us to develop the footing—for

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

business and pleasure machines which in all good time we shall be able to run for the clients—we have made. The obvious safety we shall offer and that and low prices are bound to make the pleasures of aeroplaning on new lines extremely popular.

Since leaving England we had had no opportunity of having our Fellows' magnetos properly cleaned up or attended to, and the one in continuous use which had been damaged by a pseudo-magneto doctor at one of the aerodromes en route required attention and had earned a rest. The spare magneto had shown signs of rust, due to the contact with sea air, and had lost its residual magnetism, and we despaired of being able to have either of them expertly attended to in Calcutta. On the 17th of March a friend informed us that we might safely place the two magnetos in the care of Mr. Smith, Manager of the Russa Engineering Works, Limited, at a suburb of Calcutta called Bhowanipore. We set out at once to see this gentleman and arrived at the works at 8 A.M. Within five minutes Mr. Smith, who received us most cordially, had called in his expert magneto-man and the mechanical brains of our engine were speedily set in order, the magnets being remagnetised within two hours. Mr. Smith very knidly showed us over his very up-to-date works and we were agreeably surprised to find such a very complete show in the East. Usually things out here, so far as we have been able to see, are slummed most perfectly throughout. At the Russa Works we had an





## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

eye-opener. The principal machine-shop, which covers nearly an acre, we should say, held the very latest machines. The first to attract attention were the gear-cutters, the Fellows gear-shapers and the Bilgram bevel-gear generating machines. In another department were all the machines used during the War for the manufacture of machine-guns, fuses, lanceheads and standard gauges for ordnance throughout India. A little further away a party of highly skilled men were at work making the automatic coin-weighing machines for the Indian mints. In yet another section of the works we came across something specially interesting to us and something which is bound to develop enormously shortly,—the plant for the manufacture of all manner of aeroplane requirements from a six-cylinder crank-shaft to the smallest incidental. This plant is being specially prepared with a view to developing aeroplane work. There is a great live wire in these works in the person of Mr. Smith, and outside the machines set aside for the repairs and, indeed, the manufacture of internal combustion engines and the handling of every appurtenance to the good service of motor cars, he has his mind firmly rivetted on the possibilities of aviation in India, and is preparing for the great strides bound to come of their own force, and which he shows very great but silent intent to stimulate.

We must take this opportunity of recommending all aviators to visit the works ; and to thank Mr. Smith,

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

first for his courtesy and interest in our venture, and secondly for the material help he gave us with our magnetos. The Russa Engineering Co., Ltd., stands for everything high-class in machine work, welding, etc., in India, while it distributes several of the best American motor-cars, various gas, oil and petrol engines, pumps, electric lifts and electrical and other instruments specially manufactured to cover the idiosyncrasies of the Indian climate.

Several small wants of an electrical nature were required and we set about getting them.

The name Osler stands out in Old Court House Street and represents the mark of the biggest electrical firm in Calcutta, if not in India. It was to this firm that we addressed our insulating tape and electrical wants. Mr. Robbins, the head of Osler's, easily found exactly what we wanted from his very extensive stock, and we again left a business house with the articles we desired and the best wishes of the doyen. We are satisfied that Calcutta merchants are too rich to care about money, as on three occasions during this day of shopping, vendors have promised to send on the bills and they are not yet to hand. This will be a record of our endeavour to collect bills and pay accounts before leaving on our long flight and that our executors have no instructions regarding them.

Our tyres and tubes, which were manufactured by the Palmer Cord Co., had done splendidly up to this

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time, but owing to the nature of the climate with its great variations of temperature being bad for rubber goods, we thought that it would be better to carry some spares in the way of tubes and these we received at the works of Milton Limited, in Dhurrumtollah Street, which is one of the busiest streets in Calcutta. Milton Limited is a household word in Calcutta and they are the agents for the best American tyres, the Firestone. The company also does a great deal of motor business in addition to its horse-importing line, now rapidly being displaced by the motor. In the old days Mr. Milton was the leading horse-importer and had one of the biggest stables in Calcutta. Since then he has taken advantage of the motor-car, has turned his business into a limited liability company and is rapidly reaching the top of the tree. With the "go" he has and the splendid backing given him by the employés, he is well on the way to fortune. The company runs the Maxwell agency in Calcutta and we learned from Mr. Milton that he cannot supply anything like the number of cars ordered. He is behind about 400 cars and with very little hope of being able to get them for months. He was able to supply us with the Firestone tubes we required and was quite prepared to cut down and ready up two covers for our wheels if we wished. As those now in use show very little sign of wear we shall carry on with them. Mr. Milton did all he could for us and his advice *re* the attention rubber should have, in such a climate as this, will be followed.

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Our next requirement was an air-cap apiece. We tried shop after shop and finally pulled up at that of Monteith & Co., in Old Court House Street, opposite the Government House, which we determined to visit after our shopping had been completed. At Monteith's we were supplied with caps similar to those supplied to our predecessors, the Ross Smiths. The caps are just the thing and will be useful for many a year.

Having purchased all the foot-wear we required and not wanting any of the high-class harness or the beautiful tiger skins which we saw on exhibition at Monteith's, we went on our way armed with the caps, of which we were very proud and feeling certain that the House of Monteith would be glad to hear from us when we had realised the very good wishes extended to us.

The weather was very hot and we decided to go to the cool air of the Zoo and get a few photos of the leading denizens of that delightful place. Zoos in all parts of the world have attracted us and we have visited those at Paris, Lyons, Naples, Rome, Athens and Karachi. Now we added another, that of Calcutta, and a good one it is. On our way there we looked over the splendid buildings of the Royal Calcutta Turf Club, which must have cost many lakhs of rupees. The race-course is one of the best we have seen and the grass, even after all the heavy racing which has lately been carried on, was still in excellent condition. The enclosures and the totalisators reflect the greatest credit on the management, which is

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

vested in a Board of Stewards and a Secretary, and upon the latter falls all the work of running one of the biggest racing organisations in the world. He has earned the greatest thanks of the City of Calcutta. Near the course is the Victoria Memorial, a splendid building erected or rather in course of erection by leading constructors with money provided by subscription. The dome is a magnificent affair made entirely of beautifully worked marble. The building has cost something like a million pounds at the present rate of exchange, and a great deal more is to be expended upon it. When it is finished there will be no better building of its kind in the East. The dome is about 50 feet lower than that of St. Paul's in London. The interior will be laden with beautiful statues from Italy, and we understand that Mr. Esch, the architect, is now on his way to that country to make the necessary purchases. When the money to build this memorial was subscribed, it was invested in Government stock, and it is said that owing to the depreciation in the value of this paper more money will have to be found to complete the splendid edifice. It seems to a stranger that this building would be a splendid place for the Congress of India. We hear, on the other hand, that it is to be at Delhi. We know that place and think that it will be easy to pass laws on catch divisions if that is to be the headquarters of the parliament. Messrs. Martin & Co., the builders of the Victoria Memorial, have been some years on the work and, indeed, the foundations were marked down by Lord Curzon, when

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this great statesman was the Viceroy. It is said that he used to amuse himself in the early morning walking with pegs and measuring-tapes, and picturing his great idea of a monument to the Queen-Empress. We spent our afternoons seeing everything worth while in Calcutta, and during the mornings and evenings for three days we attended to the aeroplane.

By this time we had practically finished our overhauling of the aeroplane and there but remained the completion of the strut-wire repairs. A very special 20-gauge wire was required and we found it at the hands of Major H. Hobbs, a very old Calcutta "hand," who, by the way, has written enough witty, topical and human matter to make the average Australian newspaper editor jealous. We met him, enjoyed a deal of his writings of the miscellaneous kind and one of his books, to mention nothing of his true-to-life anecdotes, and while mentioning the want of wire in a cursory sort of way, he informed us that he could be depended upon to supply the want. He did, and so D.H. 9 carries some of Major H. Hobbs' piano wire, for that indeed it is. We must mention a little matter for which we are indebted to Major Hobbs, and it is particularly interesting in view of the fact that this is written on the day of the Khalifat Hartal, a sort of passive strike organised by the Muslim leaders as a protest against the removal of the Caliph, the Sultan of Turkey, from Constantinople. A strike or a riot in India is usually well engineered, and a riot is made by men who in the ordinary business of life

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are particularly quiet. Some time ago Mr. Hobbs went to look on at a petty riot in Calcutta and was surprised to find that the leader or one of them was one of his own very docile and ordinarily quiet workmen. There was the meek individual slapping his chest, inciting his companions to riot and calling upon the troops to shoot at his bare breast if they dared. This changed individual escaped arrest and within few days was back at his desk as meek and mild as he was for the many years he had sat there without any bellicose inspiration. Truly the natives of India are extraordinary people. This day of the Khalifat Hartal was supposed to hold something terrible in the making, but it passed off without even so much as the collection of a noisy crowd. All business was more or less at a standstill but there was no sign of any riot. The power of the Caliph has gone. We were presented with a printed copy of a telegram sent to the Viceroy, by the Calcutta Muslims, by one of the waiters at our hotel. It read well and was to the effect that if the Emperor interfered in the business of Constantinople, he could take it as a certainty that the Muslims would no longer be loyal to the throne. Our experience of the Mahomedans in more countries than India is one which makes us feel that the loyalty of such people is hardly worth a consideration. There are good and bad of them, mostly bad. A more truculent lot it has not been our bad luck to meet. Be the Muslim a merchant, a kitchen boy, a taxi-driver or gharriwallah, he is equally

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impertinent, sneering and disloyal. He was the same in Mesopotamia, is the same in Egypt, and the actions of Enver Pasha, Djemal Pasha and others in Turkey show that even at their headquarters the same disgusting traits are apparent. They have licked the hands of their Caliph, and in the next breath they have degraded his person and all that he represented to the religion of the followers of the Prophet. Thank Heaven, we have not to live among such people, and thank Heaven again that notwithstanding their numbers they hold little in the way of a threat to our Empire. Australia is near enough to step in to deal with this kind of population if the Mother-country should have her hands too full elsewhere to do so.

We commenced our shopping expedition in Calcutta under very good auspices, and were fortunate in being recommended to Messrs. Harrison, Hathaway and Co.'s for new mufflers, which after several tries elsewhere in the great city we were unable to procure. We must have the warmest and best, and the shoddy stuff which we had been offered at ridiculous prices was not of any value to us. We are not going to forget the kindness of Messrs. Tydeman and Chubb of this firm, and are only sorry that we could not avail ourselves of the many enticing articles of apparel which were offered to us for our journey, and particularly we shall not forget the remarks of the former gentleman anent the supply of garments offered us for our future wives, which, bearing the name of "Dove," were light enough even for airmen,



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and the most delightful under-garments for *their* wives and other people's wives.

Before departing from Calcutta we determined to complete all our wants so that the comforts so necessary on such a long flight might not be wanting. Our Icy-Hot flask had been badly knocked about and was no longer of service, and there were other articles of which we were in need. We were advised by a brother officer to see the show-rooms of Messrs. Walter Locke & Co., Limited, with a view to locating some of our requirements. Our visit was indeed a joyful one, for not only did we find the exact neat little Thermos we wanted, but one of the assistants, recognising us from paper photos, produced Mr. Bradshaw, the *deus ex machina* of Walter Locke and Co., and a most cordial reception was accorded us by that gentleman. We could not carry one-quarter of the articles which we felt we should take from this delightful house of business. We were faced by all that is best in sporting-guns and implements used in our school-days, motor-cycles and all the motor accessories which so please the fiends who run internal combustion engines, while in the other departments we saw practically everything which we would want when the day arrives for settling down. However, we have Mr. Bradshaw's assurance that we have but to write our wants, no matter where we are, and be it motor-cycle, lamps or a silver service, the package will be forwarded to us, as to other clients, on the day the order is received. Our Thermos from Messrs. Walter Locke & Co., Ltd.,

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will keep us in touch with that enterprising and up-to-date firm for many a year. This company's premises are situated on what is known as the Esplanade, a street facing the "Maidan," or open common, in the Chowringhee quarter of Calcutta. It is remarkable that all the buildings along this esplanade are tall and of striking architecture, while the Chowringhee presents a polyglot of buildings of all colours, heights and degrees of slumminess. There is a rent war at Calcutta, and somehow or other the Municipality cannot see if they tear down the hovels of Chowringhee and allow sky-scrapers to be set up in their places, that rents must drop and the coffers of the Municipality be more than filled from the higher taxes which may be collected from the same ground area. As the fares charged by taxi-owners are inordinately high for those who depend on England for their financial sinews, owing to high exchange against such persons, we patronised the electric trams as far as possible. The system is a good one and the fares are reasonable. From the Esplanade we passed up Chowringhee to Watts', the boot-makers and saddlers, where we were fitted with most excellent new shoes.

Having seen all there was to see in the "city" section of Calcutta, we proceeded along the splendid thoroughfare of Chowringhee, past the Grand Hotel and so on to a house of business of which we had need, and the principal reason, or rather the principal need, was a bottle or two of a preparation called MILTON. It is

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stated in the advertisements anent this preparation that it does 101 things, so we set out to get it and make it do still another act. We are not going to expose here the purpose for which we wanted the stuff, but we shall Miltonise in the certainty that results are ready. We are just going to describe our entry into the Milton house. The name over the wide footpath is Kellner and Co., Ltd. We entered into a cool little atrium commanded by a white-headed old Indian dressed in the whitest of cotton suits, who asked us in the purest English if he could do anything for us. On our left there were thousands of bottles of various coloured fluids and apparently we were in a beverage store, for in large letters the goodness of O.H.M.S. and other-spirits produced in Scotland were exposed in a very gentlemanly way. We told our story in a few words, and the old Babu told us that surely we must see his burra-sahibs (we call them bosses in Australia). For a couple of bottles of "Milton" it was hardly worth while seeing the boss, we declared, but the old chap would not have it and we were conducted to the office, through rows and rows of cases all marked with addresses to various parts of India. We were indeed in a warehouse where other things than Milton were dealt in very largely. In a moment we were the D.H. 9 aviators, and Mr. Fell and Mr. Hore were telling us something of Kellner & Co., Ltd. We felt that we must have a bottle of O.H.M.S., out of the great number of real good things offered to us as stimulants. The sales of

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this and other spirits are enormous and we had an eye-opener as to the whisky-drinking capacity, of the good brands, in India. It is a veritable sponge and it is certain to our minds that no other whisky-distributing firm can sell much, or India must truly roll. Mr. Fell told us that drinkers of their whiskies never feel that they are looping the loop or doing rolls such as we did to the consternation of the onlookers at poor, dead, old Delhi. We should have liked to remain at Kellner's for the rest of the hot morning, but after looking over the store of more than £200,000 worth of human lubricant we felt faint. We were revived at the expert hands of Kellner & Co., and having stowed away our Milton we took leave of those who were rapidly becoming our hosts, with the firm conviction that if we ever wanted any kind of drink which would do us good we should send out an S.O.S. signal to Kellner's. There is parcel going into the aeroplane for us, but its contents are secret and it is not to be opened until we are short of anything. We wonder what Kellner's have put in it; something eatable, we suppose, for we noticed edibles of great delicacy on our trip through the stores, and we will be short of something before we have gone far on our journey.

By the time we got away from Kellner's the day for all business purposes was done. Next morning we went on with our shopping programme.

Part of it was to arm ourselves with some of Lipton's cocoa and chocolate. Lipton's tea we are able to get

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anywhere on the road, but our experience regarding the other two commodities is different. We hied ourselves to the head office of Lipton in India, off one of the very oldest streets in Calcutta, *viz.*, Bentinck Street,—possibly named after the schloss of the late boss Hun. We met the manager and were surprised that Lipton's office was such a huge affair. Out of it we got without difficulty all our requirements, and these good things will be stowed away in the fuselage, to be drawn upon as we wish on the long voyage in front of us. We should want a large cabin indeed if we had availed ourselves of all the good things pressed upon by Messrs. Lipton, for whose offers and good will we are indeed grateful.

From Lipton's we went to the National Bank to arrange some finance. This bank is situated, with a lot of others, in Clive Street, the Bank street of Calcutta. From here we went on until we came to the narrowing of this street, and just near its commencement we found the firm we were looking for, Messrs. Blackwood & Blackwood. We required a little asphalt for our wheels and we were to procure it from them. Blackwoods are the sole agents for Harrison's asphalt, among other things. While in his office, Mr. Little, the head of the firm, drew our attention to a paint which might suit us for prettying up the "P.D." We went out of the office with sufficient "No Flame" paint to whiten the bottom of the fuselage. With this covering we felt emboldened to seek out an insurance company and ask them to insure the aeroplane against fire. We struck one near by and

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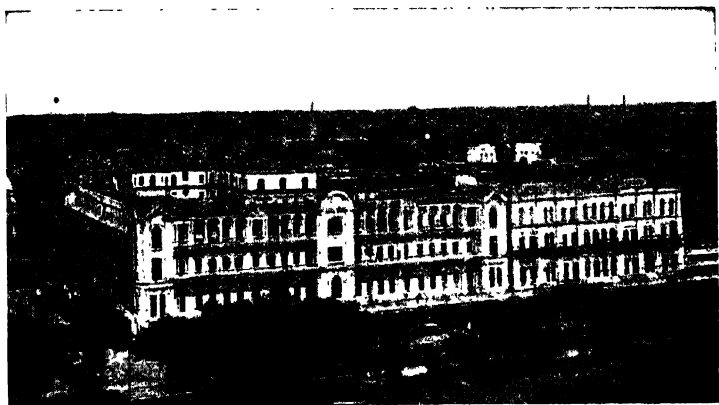
after telling the very keen manager of the Insurance Department that the "P.D." had been on fire at a few thousand feet above the earth, we asked for a policy to cover us. It was a matter for the Directors to decide. As we had seen so many of this firm's advertisements we thought that we would at once be covered for at least twenty thousand rupees. What an advertisement we offered that enterprising insurance company!! We scared them, however, and there was no policy for us. If it had been issued and we had caught fire some time in the future, as it is not unlikely we shall do, for all aeroplanes are very subject to such a disaster, especially in these hot climates, we should have made an advertisement for these people which would have pushed all other motor insurance companies right off the market. That was our point of view. Let us here write however that we should have charged the insurance company for the privilege of insuring the "P.D.," and the charge would have been a high one, for, like others of our kind, we hold all sorts of superstitious feelings about insurance policies on our lives or that of our machine.

Gillanders are however making arrangements to give us a policy from Singapore onwards.

Finished with the insurance and lunch, we passed down to see Mr. Baldwin, of Grandage, Moir & Co., in Clive Row, an offshoot of Clive Street. He had kindly undertaken to have our under-carriage painted up with the wares his company represents. He loaded us with the coolest and best beer we had for many a day, and it was

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called Sakura. One bottle we had to take to Singapore for him, and we trust that the Customs authorities will pass us in with it. Everybody round here had been so kind to us that we felt we should like to spend a week in the city part of the hub of the East. Travel was done in comfort, for we had a car apiece, one a beautiful Ford Sedan placed at our disposal by Mr. Winter, who, with Mr. Johnson, runs the Ford Company in Calcutta, and the other a big-4 Overland, placed at our service by Mr. McGee, through Mr. McIntosh, of Pratt and Co., the agents for the Overlands. These are both splendid cars and we were thankful for them. The Ford, as a matter of fact, supplied us with a bush for our aeroplane and we had painted on the top of the wing the name FORD in big letters, which we showed to the public as we looped the loop, did some stiff turns and some full rolls, which we hear put the hearts of a good many of the ladies into their mouths when we exhibited ourselves over the Barrackpore Race-course on the Saturday afternoon before we left Calcutta. By this time our "P.D." was a gay-looking bird. "Shell" held a prominent position in red letters on the under-part of the main plane, Firestone Tyres in the type the manufacturers like on the under part of the plane, Milton on the fuselage base and a few minor "spots" elsewhere. The secret sign "P.D." was held by one uneducated person to mean "pickled duck," so the "Empire," the Calcutta evening paper, said, and it added that anyone who did not know



## **Grand Hotel, Calcutta**

**THE BEST HOTEL  
IN THE EAST**





## **Hotel Mount Everest, Darjeeling**

**Situated in the best position  
facing the eternal snows**

**THE HOTEL DE LUXE OF DARJEELING**

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the true significance of the mystic letters did not deserve to. The writer, an old hand named Mr. Judge, has turned out some of the best journalistic efforts ever produced in Calcutta. We heard just on leaving Calcutta that he had to leave his seat on the "Empire" staff temporarily owing to sickness, but we trust that he will soon be back there again, fit to crack some more of his jokes and write interesting matter for the evening paper with the largest circulation in Mission Row.

We did all the restaurants and hotels as sightseers, for as we lived at the Grand there was no necessity to leave that hostelry for any meals. One likes to look all the same. Mr. Stephen did all he could to see to our comfort and we were fixed up with two of the best rooms we had occupied since leaving London. The Grand is an enormous structure of about 600 rooms, all equipped in up-to-date style. The history of the Grand is indeed interesting. From a wee thing with a thatched roof, it is what it is now. Mr. Stephen is a born man of business and as he built the place himself—he is no mean builder. He invited us to visit his Mt. Everest Hotel at Darjeeling. We should much have liked to have seen Gauri Shunker and the Himalayas but the sights take time, and we have none to spare. Firpo's and Peliti's are the restaurants chic of Calcutta, and indeed they are. The Great Eastern Hotel supplied us with an excellent lunch, and it is declared to be the best hotel in India. It is most ably run by Mr. R. J. Reynolds, who is not

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

only General Manager, but Secretary also. It is a well-known fact that his guests do all the advertising the hotel requires.

Business men at work in the city usually drop into the Bristol Grill or Spence's Hotel for their tiffins. Both these excellent places are run by Mr. Bowyer, who lately put them on to limited company lines. It is said that there is more business done in the beautiful billiard-room and smoking-lounge of Spence's and the Bristol Grill, which looks like some Throgmorton Street luncheon-room, than there is done on the Calcutta Exchange. Men of business meet at these two landmarks at all hours of the day and business is more easily carried on under such conditions as are offered, than in offices.

When we thought that all was ready so far as our aeroplane tuning-up was concerned, we found that some of the oil-cups required renewing, and as we could not procure the size required ready made, we addressed the Bengal Brass, Ltd., and saw the General Manager of Hopes, Ltd., who are the distributors of that concern. He quickly saw that speed was wanted and in a few hours he had turned out the oil-cups required by us. The Bengal Brass, Ltd., is a new concern which has run along under the ægis of Messrs. Howeson Bros., Ltd., who do one of the largest jute businesses in India as Managing Agents of some of the largest and most up-to-date mills. That firm is also managing the Hume Pipe Co., Ltd., which are introducing the cement pipes

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which have done so well in Australia and which have almost entirely ousted the steel and iron pipes of the olden times. India is such a slow place that it must be a very difficult business to introduce anything but iron for conducting water. However, we used to think in Australia that Hume pipes would not do, but we know differently now, and if we are not mistaken, the miles and miles of pipes at the Western Front during the great War were concrete or cement or something of the kind,—may be they were Hume pipes.

At this stage of the visit to Calcutta we went over the city and accidentally dropped a box of Silver Cross cigarettes from the cockpit. They had been given to us to carry us on our way. They dropped as we were crossing Dalhousie Tank, in Dalhousie Square, just in front of the Tata Industrial Bank and the premises of Messrs. McLeod & Co. We turned round here a few minutes afterwards and could see a crowd of people scrambling like devils for our "smokes." We suppose they knew the qualities of "Silver Cross," which at that time had been sold right out of the market and could not be got locally, owing to the necessity of the British India Tobacco Co. having to supply up-country contracts. Hopes, Ltd., however, sympathised with us in our loss and supplied another box, which is now safely stowed away in the fuselage. With all the good things we have got in our fuselage, we feel we should be able to stand a

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siege anywhere between here and Melbourne. Nothing now remained to be done to our shopping account but to get a nerve tonic, and this we did at Smith Stanistreet & Co.'s. Everybody will guess what they supplied to us, and when we say that between the time we got the good things and the morning before our departure we were bucked up immensely, we have said enough.

We had the pleasure of visiting most of the amusement houses of Calcutta during our stay and every one of them was first class. The movie rooms, such as the Elphinstone, run by the great Madan Theatres, Ltd., gave us a splendid lot of pictures, and the Empire Theatre is a top-notch place. The Frawley Company was at work there fine and right well it served the Calcutta public with all the latest London and New York hits.

Calcutta, even at this time of the year, has the greatest charm for us and we were indeed loth to leave it. Our Italian confrères of the Wing were similarly loth and found many a strut which required a little extra repair and which would necessarily keep them a day or two longer in the great city. These fliers en route to Tokio have now definitely arranged to leave Calcutta the same day as we so the populace will be able to see four aeroplanes in the air at the same time. We shall be the last away as we have a little work to do before actually leaving the city. We hope however to arrive at Akyab not long after our more opulent co-aviators on the other machines.

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

We were given a splendid time in Calcutta, and we were enabled to earn almost sufficient money to make it unnecessary for our sponsor to put his hand into his pocket for further sinews to carry us on to the end of our journey. Air travel is exceedingly expensive and to estimate within anything like the right cost is impossible. Provided we have no crash from now on, we may be able to get through comfortably, and who knows, we may establish another record such as that from Hounslow to Calcutta—Calcutta to Melbourne.

We give our salaams through this little book to all those interested in aviation in Calcutta, and especially to those who have been so kind and so helpful to us during our more or less enforced stay here.

Next time we come we hope to bring something interesting which will, under the auspices of Aerod Limited, make accidents to our air passengers almost impossible, and which will provide the greatest pleasures of air travel to the clients we hope to satisfactorily cater for in this fair land.

Au Revoir, Calcutta !

On the 1st April all arrangements for our departure having been made, we left the Ellenborough Course at 8 A.M. for our flight to Akyab across the delta of the Ganges. We rose early and intended getting off with the sun as our day's journey was to be to Rangoon, where all arrangements had been made for our arrival

## Record Flight from London to Calcutta

at about 5 P.M. We suffered first from the unpleasantness of the delta fog and then from a heavy wind right across our bow. We, however, made pretty good time and reached Akyab, after a truly wonderful trip, at 1-10 P.M. The delta scenery cannot be adequately described unless one is skilled in the art of word painting. Were we so, the word-picture which we might produce would be worth reading. One day perhaps the reader will see the wonders of the delta scenery which we saw. It's worth buying an aeroplane to do this trip.

The Akyab aerodrome is fair and the landing easy. We expected to have had our supplies ready at once but the man in charge had not got them out as the message regarding our arrival had been delayed *en route*. He had to apply to Messrs. Bulloch Brothers for the aviation spirit and that took some time. Then there was the difficulty in getting the spirit across to the aeroplane so we had to abandon the idea of making a record trip to Rangoon, upon which we were so keen. After a good night's rest we left Akyab at 7 o'clock the morning of the 2nd after a bumpy taxi which would have shaken an ordinary aeroplane to bits. Akyab is rather a pretty place and though we took several photos from 3,000 feet we got but two which we called presentable, owing to poor films. We have found Indian bought films less sensitive than those we brought from home with us. They are probably old stock. The Akyab aerodrome is right enough for a light machine with great lifting power, but very

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dangerous for such as the "P.D." with her big load.

• After running along over the most beautiful hill, forest and islet scenery—all the islands were beautifully green—we found that the carburettor was going wrong and that a forced landing for its overhaul was necessary. We searched round for a suitable landing and decided upon a bend in the Sandoway River in Tharrawaddy. By the time we swooped down towards the bend we found it crowded with natives and therefore rose slightly, cleared them and made a bad landing in a foot of mud and sand beyond. We were extremely lucky not to have crashed, but the muddy bed soon stopped our onward progress. Natives swam across to us and after attending to the carburettor we, with dozens of natives, pushed the "P.D." up over the river bank and marked out a run. The natives got to work with their country knives, hoes and axes and in a short time a space was cleared. In our run off we just managed to clear the trees in front and were again on our way to Rangoon. We passed through a gap in the mountains about half an hour later, and at 1.45 P.M. we were over Rangoon. After a circle or two we located the race-course and saw the S.V.A. machine tied down there.

We made a good landing, but the aerodrome is a very dangerous one except in one direction with a favourable wind. A strong run might send the landing aeroplane into a railway cutting ten feet deep.



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We were met at Rangoon by several people including Major Gorman of Kellner & Co., Mr. Brown of the "Times," The Russa Works Manager, the Ford representative and McKenzie and Co., who placed an Overland 4 at our disposal. We also had the representative of the Assurance Films Ltd., and his operators who were there to cinema the machine under instructions of Aerodrome Limited. They were all very kind to us and were surprised that after our experience we proposed to go on to Penang next day. Such however was our intention and the necessary parties were awaiting our arrival at the improvised aerodromes *en route*. We have to catch Mathews before he get too far ahead, or our record to-day will be of little value in Australia, notwithstanding the speed we have made and hope to continue right through. We heard that a good crowd had collected for our arrival at noon. Officers of the Rangoon Brigade took us to the Grand Stand of the course for refreshments and after tiffin we were shown some of the sights of the city.

Rangoon is a wonderful city in many ways. The striking monuments are the great Buddhist pagodas with their roofs of gold. On the Shwe Dagong Pagoda there are many lakhs worth of the precious metal. This building is a fine affair, and it occurred to us that the priests should remove all the dirty candy shops from its environs.

The city is laid out on American lines and contains some very fine business edifices. Striking among

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

them are the Post Office, Court House, Telegram House, Messrs. Steel Bros., Finlay Fleming & Co., Bulloch Bros., Rowe & Co., Ltd., Whiteaway, Laidlaw and Co., Ltd Oosman Building. An enormous expanse is covered by the business and residential quarters. The Clubs, such as the Gymkhana, a most palatial show, the Pegu and most of the bungalows are well away from the city. The principal residence is that of the Hon. Chin Tsong, a splendid example of Chinese and European architecture, said to have cost its fortunate owner about £3,00,000. This place is near the Victoria Lake, from which in the old days Rangoon drew its water supply. It is now just a useless sort of lake. Some enterprising gentlemen have formed a land company and they have bought a good deal of the land on the lake shores. This they are retailing at fabulous prices and there is quite a land boom there in the making. Government is building a fine University near by. We saw the biggest racing stable in Burma, that of Mr. Burjorjee. The horses are miniatures, Burma bred. The race-course is on military ground and would not be much good for big thoroughbreds. We were taken to a smaller course called Kambe Park. It is a small affair, about half a mile in circumference, but it is an enormous profit-earner and is independent of the Rangoon Turf Club. We heard that it was to be closed under Government compensation.

We found that Rangoon was a much more desirable place to live in than we were led to believe, and on

## Record Flight from London to Calcutta

the morning of the 4th we felt fresh and well after our strenuous rush round all the sights. A man had been sent ahead of us by Development Limited, which company carries out all our provisioning, so our rooms and wants were well attended to and our sight-seeing was made easy.

We boarded the "P.D." at 7 A.M., *en route* for Victoria Point and Penang, which city we hoped to reach the same evening. The run over the course was a bad one and we just managed to clear the buildings at the end.\* We set straight off for the Gulf of Martaban and were soon 3,000 feet up. We left Lieut. Ferrarin behind as he had crashed when landing and so another of the officers of the Italian Flying Corps on the road to Tokyo is temporarily *hors de combat*. We were up against a bad wind again and when well over the Gulf our exhaust manifold blew out. The strain on the engine had been very heavy and we thought that there must be something wrong with our lubricating appliances. The oil pressure was right so the trouble was not with the "Aerolube" which we use exclusively. The clouds lowered visibility and the heat of the flame and gases almost overpowered us. The cloud bank thickened and we could not see more than a few feet ahead. After a terrifying time we decided to lose height and land in the sea. When we had got our inflated Firestone life-belts fixed on, a hole or rift in the clouds opened in front of us and we saw some pagodas down below us. These were in Moulmein and

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

we altered our decision about dropping into the sea and set our teeth for a landing. We circled the town and saw an open space upon which we decided to land. Then we saw an aeroplane there and noted that crowds were running to the spot. The heat by this time was intense yet we could not land among the people. We dropped chits asking someone to clear the people away as we wished to land. On our next turn we saw men making strenuous efforts to push the crowd out. We were being suffocated and felt that the light flame and gas would consume us if we stopped up any longer so we decided to drop, and if the crowd were not cleared, to crash. We just cleared the telegraph lines and tried to capsize on one of the little hillocks. We struck too squarely on our wheels and bounced up 50 feet and would have shot straight into about 200 people causing the deaths of many had we not turned the nose down. The crash was terrific. The whole undercarriage was wiped off like so much wool, all our instruments but one were smashed to pieces, and we were down, wrecked and almost invisible in the smoke and dust. The crash and the damage done to our trusty little machine knocked us out but we felt that we did the right thing. The "P.D." was a sorry wreck, smashed to matchwood and the propeller torn to ribbons. Such was our involuntary arrival at the place where Poulet was wrecked. Aviators will not want to pass Moulmein with its dread history.

The Moulmein people showed their gratitude to us for our voluntary crash on their behalf. The

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

Commissioner, The Chief of Police and others including Mr. Glendining and Mr. Mitchell were especially kind. We at once communicated with Aerodrome Limited and in 48 hours the survey and estimate of damage had been drawn up, the necessary mechanics and spares were on the way and reconstruction had commenced.

Mr. Glendining very kindly took us away from the Circuit House, a kind of Rest House for travellers kept up by Government, and found quarters for us at his delightful bungalow pending the resumption of our flight. We have seen a great deal of Moulmein and the surrounding country. The railway from Rangoon ends at the station of Martaban which is connected with Moulmein by steamer of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company which runs services on all the Burma rivers. The crossing takes about 20 minutes and provides a quaint, pleasing sight. Away down the Salween River lie the steamers and sailing ships engaged in the rice and timber trade while the business town of Moulmein with its ship-building yards, is nestled below and among the hills of the estuary. A road runs up through the hills, passing the beauty spots and pagodas and beyond to the solid rock mountains, fifteen miles away.

Every hill seems to have a major or minor pagoda on its crest. We saw all of them illuminated during the Water Festival and a wonderful new sight it was. As we drove through the streets we were deluged with

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

water from the sprays and squirts of the children to the heftier buckets manipulated by the Burmese men and women in dexterous fashion. All had to pass the ordeal and a smile to the water holder brought the splash. When we had had enough, a serious glance at an intending thrower was a sufficient notice for him to direct his attentions to other parties. They are a breezy, happy, fearless lot of people—the Burmese. We have to thank Mr. Mitchell of Moulmein for his great help. All the woodwork of the fuselage and undercarriage has been made by him from teak seasoned for 25 years. Splendid wood. Though Aeroad Limited have a couple of tropical radiators speeding to us we intend starting with one made from two Overland radiators by Messrs. McKenzie & Co., Ltd., of Rangoon. All the repairs will be completed by Aeroad Limited before the end of April and when the new propeller arrives we resume our flight and are hopeful of catching Capt. Mathews round about TIMOR.

We hear that he is having trouble with his engine oil circulation. In this most important respect we have the pull over every aeroplane flying in the East to-day as we have supplies of the wonderful lubricant “Aerolube” right through to Melbourne. But one emergency landing place was unsupplied and on hearing of it, the Hon. Mr. Chin Tsong, of Messrs. Lim Soo Hean & Co., Rangoon, sent a special steamer off with the necessary quantity of Aerolube. Friction is the

## **Record Flight from London to Calcutta**

hugbear of aviators, and motorists generally, and Aerolube—our saviour on two occasions since leaving Calcutta—will, we hope, soon again enter the lists as its opponent in the Siddeley Puma engine which drives the “P.D.” We heard in Rangoon that Mr. Marris of McKenzie’s had driven an Overland 4 from Rangoon to Mandalay and that the Aerolube was as good after this great record run as it was when the Overland started out. It does not deteriorate in hot climates and our supplies may therefore be depended upon.

We have crashed at Moulmein after covering 8,343 miles of our flight from Hounslow to Australia in 95 flying hours. Had we crashed anywhere round Moulmein but on the maidan our names would probably have been added to the list of aviators who have lost their lives on the air road to Australia.

We have added another sheaf of very interesting air data to that already compiled up to Calcutta, and daily through design or accident our long, risky flight is becoming more and more justified. Our records for any commercial aviation company in India are almost invaluable and after being digested by Government some will doubtless be released.

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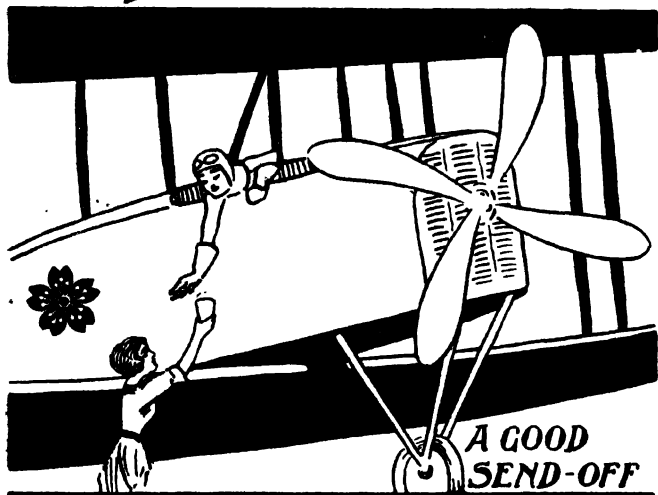
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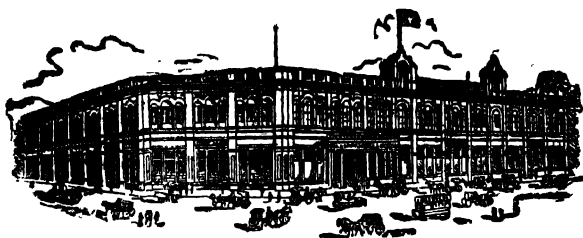


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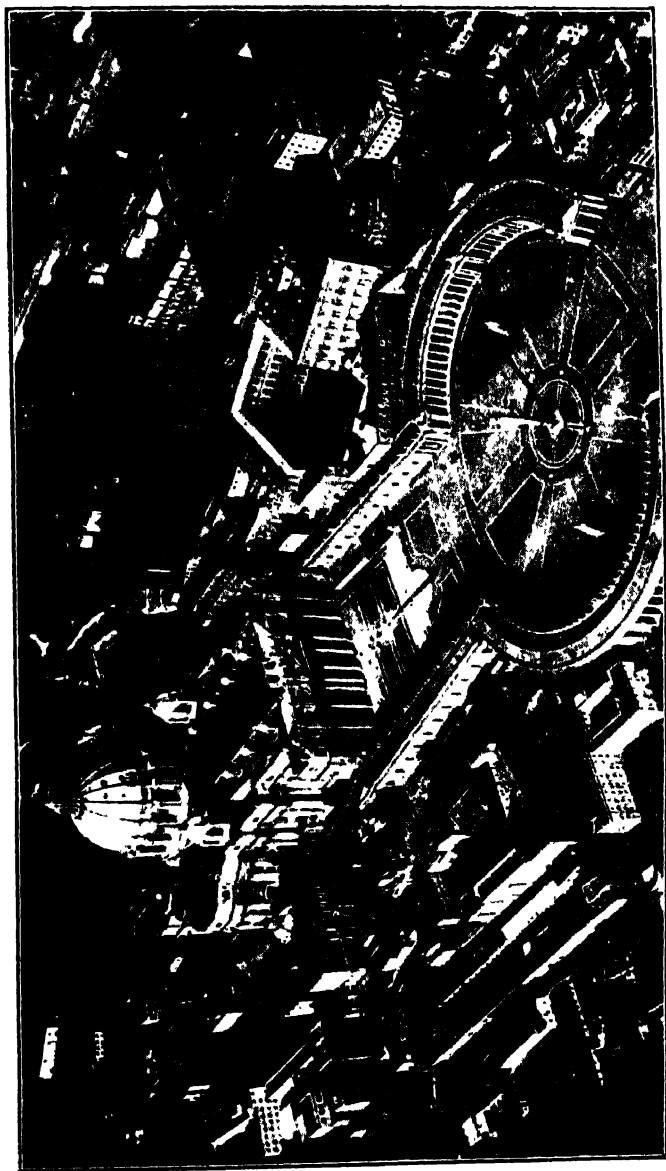
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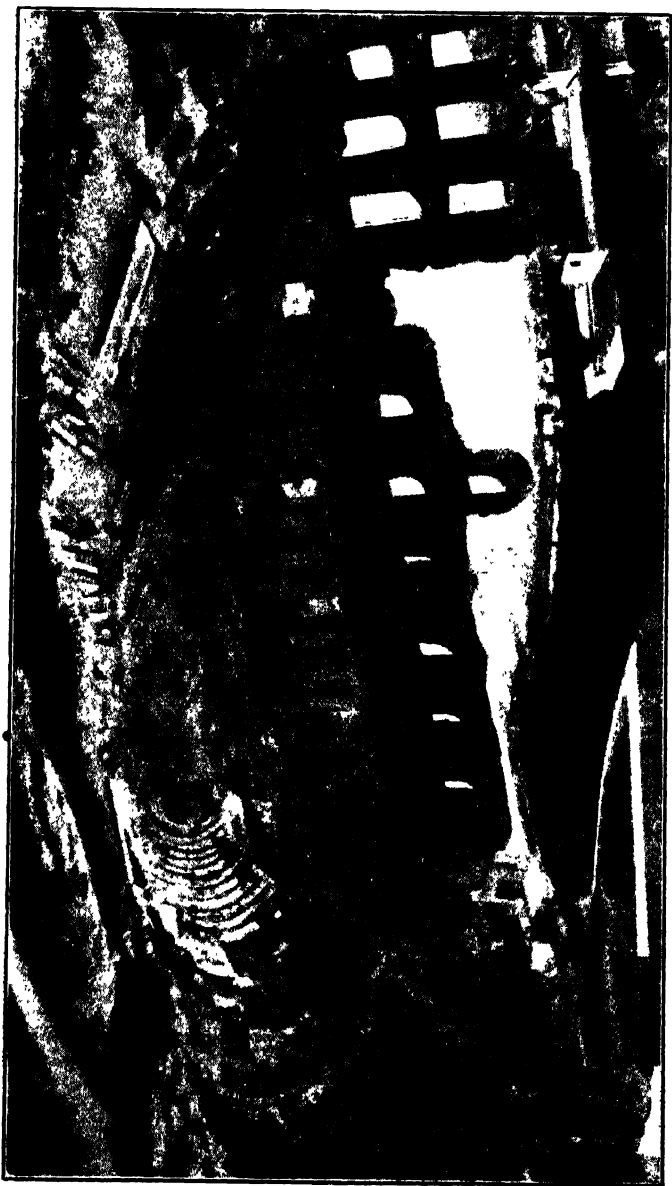
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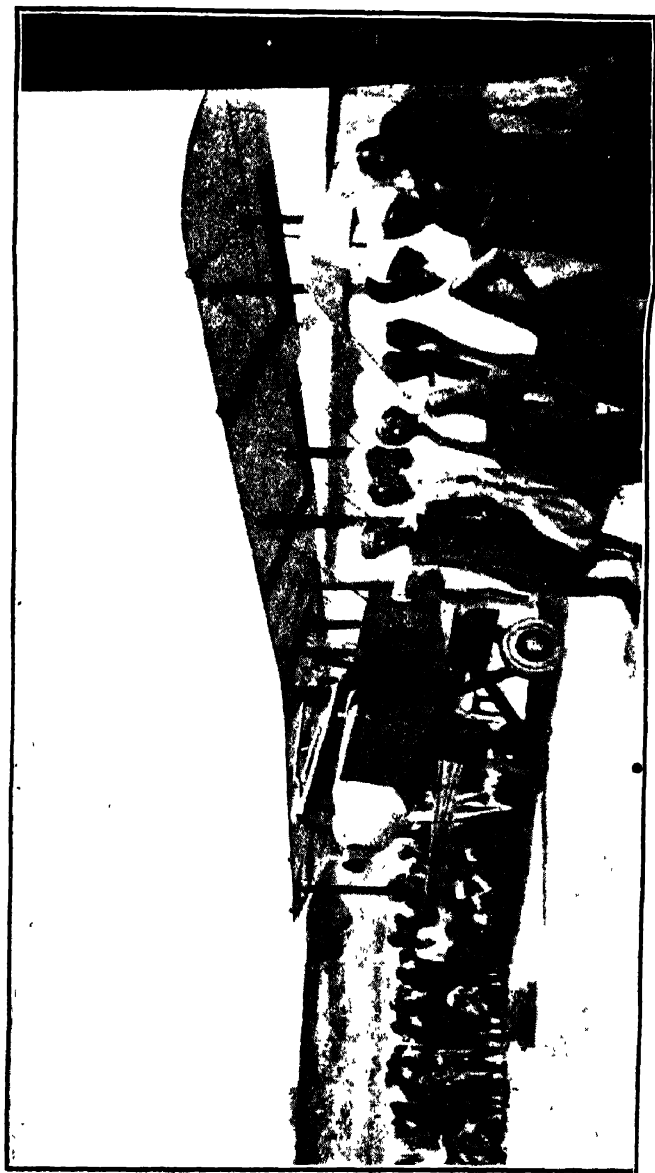
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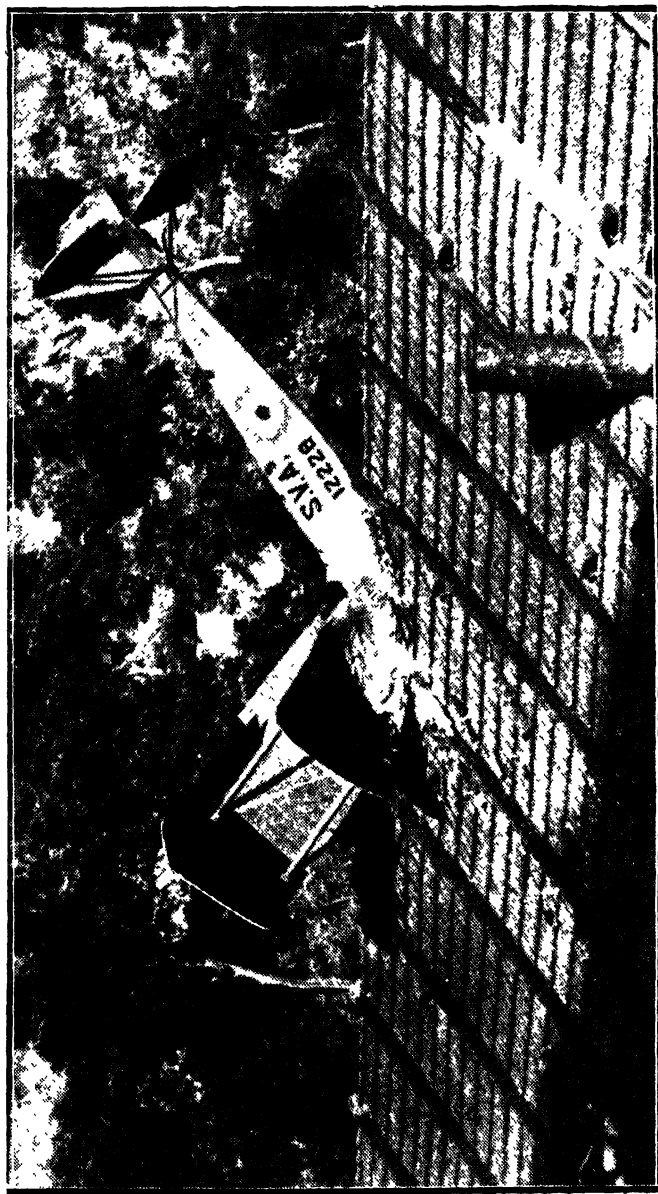
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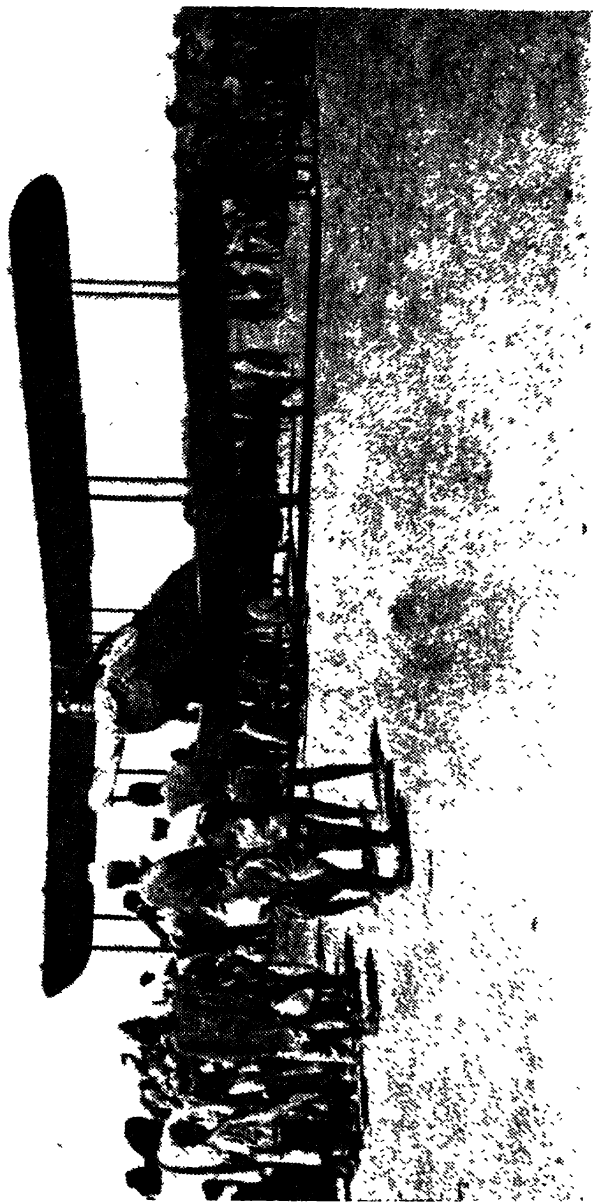
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